DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 823 EA 023 270

TITLE	Voices from the Field: 30 Expert Opinions on America 2000, The Bush Administration Strategy To "Reinvent" America's Schools.
INSTITUTION	Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.; William T. Grant Foundation, Washington, DC. Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship.
PUB DATE	Apr 91
NOTE	65p.
AVAILABLE FROM	William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 301, Washington, DC 20036-5541 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accountability; *Competition; Cultural Differences; *Educational Change; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Government Role; Poverty; *School Choice; *School Restructuring; Testing Problems
IDENTIFIERS	*America 2000; *Bush Administration

ABSTRACT

"America 2000," President Bush's national strategy for "Reinventing America's Schools" is evaluated by 30 invited experts in the following papers: "Bottom-up Reform From the Top Down" (John E. Chubb); "Would Choice + Competition Yield Quality Education?" (Richard F. Elmore); "The Federal Education Role Comes of Age" (Denis P. Doyle; "Choice, Testing and the Re-election of a President" (Gary Orfield); "Must We Reinvent the Schools?" (Gerald N. Tirozzi); "Scapegoating the Schools" (George Kaplan); "The Educational Equivalent of War?" (Michael D. Usdan); "Measuring Schools Is Not the Same as Improving Them" (Linda Darling-Hammond); "The Many-Sided Dilemmas of Testing" (Jeannie Oakes); "A Case of Misplaced Emphasis" (Michael Timpane); "Testing, Testing, One, Two, Three..." (Marshall Smith); "On Teacher Accountability" (Arthur E. Wise); "Effective Policies to Help Youth" (James E. Rosenbaum); "Seven Large Questions For America 2000's Authors" (Harold Howe II); "Widening, Not Narrowing, the Gap" (Jose A. Cardenas); "Where's The Carrot? Where's The Stick?" (Siobhan O. Nicolau); "Ignoring Social Dynamite Primed to Explode" (Bernard C. Watson); "Educating the New American Student" (Anne C. Lewis); "Scenes From The New America Civil War" (Joan Lipsitz); "Toward A Focused Research Agenda" (Michael W. Kirst); "The Essential Federal Role" (Gordon Ambach); "Reform Without A Supportive Policy System Can't Succeed!" (Susan H. Fuhrman; "Where's the Community in America 2000?" (Milbrey W. McLaughlin); "Fix the Kids or Fix the Institutions?" (Sid Gardner); "Ignoring the Lessons of Previous School Reform" (Edward J. Meade, Jr.); "Steaming Backward to 2000" (William W. Wayson); "Politics and Performance: Airing Some Nettlesome Issues" (Thomas Toch); "A Mixed Bag for Adult Education" (Forrest P. Chisman); "Cracks in the Foundation" (Joan L. Wills); and "Taking Aim: Making the Nation Smarter" (Thomas G. Sticht). (AA)

EA

ED336823

VOICES FROM THE FIELD:

30 Expert Opinions on America 2000, The Bush Administration Strategy To "Reinvent" America's Schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Halperin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

GORDON AMBACH • JOSE CARDENAS • FORREST CHISMAN • JOHN CHUBB • DENIS DOYLE • RICHARD ELMORE • SUSAN FUHRMAN • SID GARDNER • LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND • HAROLD HOWE II • GEORGE KAPLAN • MICHAEL KIRST • ANNE LEWIS • JOAN LIPSITZ • MILBREY MCLAUGHLIN • EDWARD MEADE, JR. • SIOBHAN NICOLAU • JEANNIE OAKES • GARY ORFIELD • JAMES ROSENBAUM • MARSHALL SMITH • THOMAS STICHT • MICHAEL TIMPANE • GERALD TIROZZI • THOMAS TOCH • MICHAEL USDAN • BERNARD WATSON • WILLIAM WAYSON • JOAN WILLS • ARTHUR WISE

EA 023 270

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:
THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION
COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP
and the
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PREFACE

Since the publication in 1988 of its two reports on *The Forgotten Half*,[1] the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship has carefully monitored movements in the Nation's Capital and in the states which might improve the lives of America's young people—as future workers, parents, and citizens. Our focus remains constant: *"to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners and policy makers and, thus, to help our nation chart a better future for youth."*

In the two and one-half years since the Commission's final report, a great deal of constructive activity has been recorded in the halls of the Congress and in legislatures, commissions, school boards and youth-serving agencies nationwide. In its boldness, breadth, eminent sponsorship, and controversy, however, no single event matches the release on April 18, 1991, of *America 2000: An Education Strategy*.

When the President of the United States and a vigorous Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Education challenge the nation to embark upon "a nine-year crusade," a multi-pronged plan to "reinvent" America's schools, an effort that could well determine the nation's very future, the nation must respond with thoughtful analysis of the significance and possible consequences of such sweeping proposals.

Accordingly, the Commission, in collaboration with the Institute for Educational Leadership, asked three dozen individuals to assess *America 2000*, particularly from the perspectives of their distinguished service in the field and as leaders, evaluators and close observers of previous federal and foundation efforts to improve schooling and education. Thirty extremely busy individuals accepted our challenge to respond with the speed necessary to join and enrich the building debate. The result is ***Voices From The Field: 30 Expert Opinions on "America 2000," The Bush Administration Strategy to "Reinvent" America's Schools***. The counsel it offers and the issues it raises reflect a rich diversity of viewpoints and experience. A commitment to a better future for America's youth is the repeating theme that unites these thoughtful American voices.

Thanks are due chiefly to the contributors for their candid assessments of the Bush Administration's strategy and for their willingness to "go on the record" as Congress, the education and corporate communities, and the general public weigh their respective responses. Collectively, the authors wish to express gratitude to all those whose research and comments were helpful in writing these essays. Each author, however, takes full responsibility for the opinions he or she expresses. These views do not necessarily reflect the positions of their sponsoring institutions or funding agencies.

Thanks, too, to Atelia Melaville, Daphne Moore and Tasha Harris who helped weave this coat of many colors into what we believe is a useful contribution to public discussion.

Samuel Halperin

Youth and America's Future:
The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on
Work, Family and Citizenship

[1] *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America* and *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families*.

This publication is not copyrighted and may be freely quoted without prior permission, provided the source is identified as ***Voices from the Field: 30 Expert Opinions on "America 2000," The Bush Administration Strategy to "Reinvent" America's Schools***. Washington, DC: William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship *and* Institute for Educational Leadership, 1991.

William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 301 Washington, DC 20036-5541

Additional copies of ***Voices from the Field*** are available at $3.00 each postpaid, to cover cost of mailing and handling.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD:
30 Expert Opinions on America 2000, *THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY TO "REINVENT" AMERICA'S SCHOOLS*

CONTENTS

Preface — Inside Front Cover
Samuel Halperin

REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS

Bottom-up Reform From the Top Down — 1
John E. Chubb

Would Choice + Competition Yield Quality Education? — 3
Richard F. Elmore

The Federal Education Role Comes of Age — 5
Denis P. Doyle

Choice, Testing and the Re-election of a President — 7
Gary Orfield

Must We Reinvent the Schools? — 9
Gerald N. Tirozzi

Scapegoating the Schools — 11
George Kaplan

The Educational Equivalent of War? — 13
Michael D. Usdan

ON TEACHING AND TESTING

Measuring Schools Is Not the Same as Improving Them — 15
Linda Darling-Hammond

The Many-Sided Dilemmas of Testing — 17
Jeannie Oakes

A Case of Misplaced Emphasis — 19
Michael Timpane

"Testing, Testing, One, Two, Three . . ." — 21
Marshall Smith

On Teacher Accountability — 23
Arthur E. Wise

Effective Policies to Help Youth — 25
James E. Rosenbaum

ON POVERTY AND DIVERSITY

Seven Large Questions For *America 2000*'s Authors — 26
Harold Howe II

Widening, Not Narrowing, the Gap — 28
Jose A. Cardenas

Where's The Carrot? Where's The Stick?
Siobhan O. Nicolau 30

Ignoring Social Dynamite Primed to Explode
Bernard C. Watson 32

Educating the New American Student
Anne C. Lewis 34

Scenes From The New American Civil War
Joan Lipsitz 36

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Toward A Focused Research Agenda
Michael W. Kirst 38

The Essential Federal Role
Gordon Ambach 39

Reform Without A Supportive Policy System Can't Succeed!
Susan H. Fuhrman 41

Where's the Community in *America 2000*?
Milbrey W. McLaughlin 43

Fix the Kids or Fix the Institutions?
Sid Gardner 45

Ignoring the Lessons of Previous School Reform
Edward J. Meade, Jr. 46

Steaming Backward to 2000
William W. Wayson 48

Politics & Performance: Airing Some Nettlesome Issues
Thomas Toch 50

A NATION OF STUDENTS

A Mixed Bag for Adult Education
Forrest P. Chisman 52

Cracks in the Foundation
Joan L. Wills 54

Taking Aim: Making the Nation Smarter
Thomas G. Sticht 56

The Authors 58

BOTTOM-UP REFORM FROM THE TOP DOWN

John E. Chubb

"In essence, schools have become confused about their objectives, unappreciative of their teachers and principals, alienated from their communities, overburdened by their political and bureaucratic authorities, and left unaccountable for their results."

President Bush's *America 2000* plan is the most encouraging education proposal to emerge from the federal government in a very long time. It is coherent, comprehensive and—in part because of these qualities—different. It's not perfect. In particular, there are lots of crucial "details" that could make or break its implementation. But it's not everyday that the federal government truly gets serious about a problem. And it's not like the federal government to seriously reconsider its role. *America 2000* does both.

Although the plan could be more explicit, it is based on a sound understanding of why America's schools have become a problem—why their performance is so uneven and mediocre. In essence, schools have become confused about their objectives, unappreciative of their teachers and principals, alienated from their communities, overburdened by their political and bureaucratic authorities, and (as compensation for these difficulties?) left unaccountable for their results. Not everyone would agree with this diagnosis. Some would say it is incomplete—where are the problems of financial inequity or family breakdown, for example? But few would deny that the ills addressed by *America 2000* are not fundamental elements of the education problem.

Scholars agree, for example, that "effective schools" exhibit clear objectives, strong educational leadership by principals, professionalism and teamwork on the part of teachers, and high academic expectations for all students. They widely acknowledge that schools have become too bureaucratized—a source of the confusion, weak leadership, lack of professionalism, and tolerance of mediocrity characteristic of many ineffective schools. Few scholars believe that parents and local communities are as involved in and supportive of schools as they once were or need to be.

Many scholars also say that education reform has tried for too long and with too little success to regulate the educational process—curriculum, textbooks, instructional methods, facilities, class time, requirements. It is time to leave more of the educational process to the people in the schools and closest to the problems—teachers, principals, parents, and other ordinary members of the local community—and to hold these people accountable for educational results.

This is precisely what the Administration is proposing. It aims to push control over the educational process downward through competition and choice. And, it intends to assert control over educational results through standards and testing.

Coming from Washington, these are bold, new ideas. For years, the government in Washington has underestimated the education problem and overestimated its ability to directly effect a solution. Federal education policy has long been based on the assumption that there is nothing wrong with America's schools that a special program cannot remedy. If poor children are trapped in schools with low expectations, uninspired teaching, apathetic leadership, and a weak curriculum, then provide the schools with extra funds to hire a few extra teachers (who may also be uninspiring) to teach a few special classes (which are often remedial and plagued by low expectations). At best, such an approach provides poor children a couple of hours of weekly respite from an educational experience that is otherwise bleak. Of course, a brief respite is better than no respite at all. But if the federal government is serious about education reform, it must find ways to transform or replace the schools that are chronically failing America's young people. The temporary pain relievers that the federal government has been offering to America's schools are doing little or nothing to heal them.

In an important way, federal programs may also be making the schools' ailments worse. The scores of elementary and secondary education statutes now on the books have become longer and progressively more detailed (Chapter 1 is 15 times lengthier today than when enacted in 1965), and their implementation has stimulated impressive growth in education bureaucracy at the state and local levels. This growth has further weakened the organizational coherence and vitality of schools, and the bonds among schools, parents, and communities. Young people's educational experience has become fragmented, and the lines of accountability for school performance have become further complicated.

Although it is difficult to justify the federal government's long-standing approach to education reform on educational grounds, it is easy to do so on political grounds. Members of Congress cannot claim nearly the credit from constituents or gain nearly the support of special interest groups for educational aid that is not narrowly targeted but is allocated according to local decisions and priorities.

Wisely, *America 2000* rejects the traditional federal focus on special programs and new national legislation. It recognizes that if the plan is going to succeed, it will require the long-term cooperation of state and local officials—not the short-term cooperation of Congress and the President. Ultimately, it is state and local authority, not federal, that structures the schools and school systems. The big changes that need to be made can only be made if subnational institutions decide to make them. In recent years, the national government has never really acknowledged this. It has never undertaken a cooperative effort with state and local authorities to spur fundamental structural change at the school level, and it has frequently fallen into conflict with these authorities over the implementation of special programs that can never improve schools substantially.

For nearly two years, beginning with the planning of the "Education Summit" in Charlottesville, Virginia, in September 1989, the Administration has been working with the governors of the fifty states to develop a set of national education goals, and more importantly, to build a bipartisan consensus at the state level for far-reaching education reform. This quiet effort seems to be paying off. The President's *America 2000* strategy

was endorsed by prominent Democratic as well as Republican governors. Many states are already debating or implementing the kinds of ambitious reforms proposed in the President's strategy. And, after much negotiation, the governors and the President finally have, in *America 2000*, a coherent and aggressive strategy for pursuing their lofty but, heretofore, unattainable national goals.

The Congress can and should become a partner in the process of restructuring American education to achieve these educational goals. The President's strategy requests new legislative authority—most importantly, to pay part of the start-up costs for the "New American Schools" and to provide incentive grants to educational systems implementing educational choice. The Congress should support these requests. But whether Congress becomes a partner or not, the *America 2000* strategy will proceed. The *America 2000* strategy, unlike virtually all federal education initiatives before it, depends primarily on the cooperation of the states—not the Congress—and for good financial measure, relies on new contributions from business (whose stake in education reform is huge) rather than on additional revenues from taxpayers. If the Administration is willing to maintain the lead, the *America 2000* strategy will proceed.

Will it succeed? The strategy is based on a good understanding of the nature and magnitude of the problem. It is backed by a bipartisan coalition of the subnational decision makers whose authority most influences the structure of schools and school systems. And it depends on the federal government for something that it is actually able to provide—namely, strong leadership, especially now that a seasoned "education governor," Lamar Alexander, is at the helm of the Education Department.

Substantively, the strategy also makes sense. It includes a number of limited, yet worthy, initiatives that address specific weaknesses in the schools—for example, academies for school leaders and teachers to promote leadership and professionalism. But the great promise of the strategy lies in the four major objectives by which it aims to restructure schools and school systems and the four major initiatives designed to meet those objectives.

First, to help clarify school objectives and to provide a means for holding schools accountable for results, the strategy proposes to develop "New World Standards"—in broad outline, a national curriculum in five core subjects—and an "American Achievement Test" to measure progress toward these new standards. Both the standards and the test raise important issues—the danger of even greater central control over schooling, the potential unfairness of tests, the encouragement of crass "teaching to the test." But the basic logic of the proposal is sound. If schools are to be certain of their purpose and to be judged for fulfilling it, basic standards and appropriate tests are necessary.

Second, to discourage bureaucratization, empower teachers and principals, strengthen the bonds between schools and families, and provide a stiff measure of school accountability, the strategy calls for an expansion of educational choice. The current educational system, based on top-down political and bureaucratic control of the schools, is unlikely, of its own accord, to relinquish authority, empower people in the schools, or develop accountability mechanisms that don't involve stifling bureaucracy. The competitive pressures of a system of real educational choice will promote the kind of restructuring that the current system ordinarily cannot. Again, there are many issues raised by choice such as financial equity, parent information, admissions procedures, religious school participation, and others. But, if school autonomy and accountability are key elements of restructuring, educational choice offers clear advantages over the political and bureaucratic organizing principles of education systems today.

Third, to spur the transformation of schools and to demonstrate that American education can provide real choice, the strategy proposes to create a number of R&D Centers to develop wholly new schools, and to open hundreds of New American Schools based on the ideas generated at these R&D Centers. One of the most frustrating things about school reform is that many proven ideas for school reorganization already exist—for example, those of Comer, Sizer, Levin, and others—but such good ideas are very seldom adopted. Established schools and school systems naturally resist change. Standards, testing, and choice are meant to break down this resistance and to encourage and reward change. But schools and school systems also need to know how to change. Currently, there is abundant research, but that research is not focused on the creation of new schools. If schools had existing models all over the country to emulate, schools would innovate more rapidly. The proposal for New American Schools can encourage this creative change. Critics will legitimately worry about who will operate and attend the new schools and what schools may be driven out of business by the new competition. These issues deserve debate, but the crying need for innovation does not.

Finally, the strategy seeks to inspire renewed community commitment to schools. Partially this will be done through the creation of New American Schools in hundreds of neighborhoods and communities. Choice will also foster movement in this direction. Mostly, however, the President's plan is vague about how communities will become better integrated with their schools. Perhaps this is best. There is a danger in the federal government (or state governments for that matter) telling local communities how to get involved with their schools. It threatens to further imbed schools in the very cumbersome system from which the President's strategy at long last seeks to free them.

WOULD CHOICE + COMPETITION YIELD QUALITY EDUCATION?

Richard F. Elmore

"Given the degree of state-level initiative already being exercised, it is ironic that an administration which gives great deference to the states on matters of education policy would choose to enter an area of demonstrated state leadership."

America 2000 stresses the virtues of choice and competition for improving the performance of schools. Yet, a number of questions surround issues of choice in federal education policy. Focusing on three will help us move beyond the rhetoric of reform toward an understanding of realistic results and appropriate federal roles.

Is the Current Debate About Educational Choice or is it About the Privatization of Public Education?

A major source of confusion in the present choice debate is whether the debate is about enhancing choice for parents, students, and teachers *within* the public schools or about allowing parents to use funds to purchase education in private schools. These are, I think, two fundamentally different issues.

The notion of choice within the public schools rests on relatively firm ground, both in terms of the purposes of public education and the evidence. The main issue is not *whether* parents, students, and teachers should have choices, but *how* choices should be structured. Presently, the housing market is the main determinant of access to public education. The nature of school district assignment policies is probably the second most influential factor. Parents with relatively high incomes can afford to purchase homes in "good" school districts. If those schools disappoint them, parents can use personal funds to purchase private education. Families with knowledge, sophistication, and social position can also influence the assignment of their children within public school systems. Conversely, parents with limited incomes, less knowledge of their options, and less standing in their communities are disadvantaged by the housing market and by most district assignment policies. Policies that equalize opportunity for parents and pupils, by dramatically improving the quality of educational offerings in schools closest to their place of residence, by providing parents with flexibility in choice among schools, and by assuring that everyone understands and operates under the same policies about choice, would no doubt benefit most students and parents.

If, on the other hand, the choice debate is about allowing parents to use public funds to purchase education on the private market, then we are on much less firm ground. One proposal, for example, suggests that the states should be restricted to licensing schools; that any school—public or private—should be allowed to receive public support; that parents should be given a per pupil allotment to purchase education from licensed schools; that public allotments could be supplemented by parents; and that licensed schools should be given complete control over which students they accept, reject, or expel.[1] Proposals like this appeal to people who believe that markets and competition will improve education. There are at least two reasons to approach such proposals with caution and skepticism.

- **First, there is no such thing as a simple competitive market.** Markets vary considerably in their structures and in the degree to which they promote competition and engender quality. Education markets belong to a special set of markets in which suppliers have knowledge and resources that consumers do not. Such professional services markets are highly susceptible to manipulation and collusion on the part of suppliers, and they frequently aggravate, rather than reduce, inequalities among consumers.
- **Second, it is far from clear that the result of privatization would actually be a competitive market.** Current proposals are similar to third-party payment schemes under Medicare and Medicaid: private health care providers are subsidized by the government to provide professional services to consumers, but consumers are also free to use their own incomes to supplement the purchase of services on the private market. Third-party payment schemes have many advantages and disadvantages, but the latter do *not* include equity of access to services. Many people receive either inferior health care, or none at all. Rather than competing with each other, providers are more likely to pressure the government to increase the reimbursement rate for services. These schemes also encourage providers to select clients for whom the reimbursement rate covers or exceeds the cost of treatment. As we've seen recently in publicly-subsidized health care, budgetary pressure can cause set reimbursement rates below the actual cost of services, leaving providers and consumers to fend for themselves.

Before we wander into privatization of education, we should examine the operation of other professional services markets—proprietary vocational schools, counseling services, our experience with third party payment methods in other sectors—and analyze their implications for education.

Is Competition Likely to Improve Public Education?

Advocates of educational choice widely assume that competition among schools will lead to overall improvements in the quality of education. Competition is not a very influential factor in improving educational quality in most existing choice schemes. To be sure, public school systems that have instituted choice have opened up the possibility that schools could be closed if they demonstrated poor performance or if they failed to attract students. In fact, very few schools have been closed; most problems of performance have been handled by a concerted effort at school improvement, which is what any good school system would do about a failing school, whether or not they had choice. The most influential factor in improving quality is that systems with successful choice programs have also undertaken ambitious school improvement programs—efforts that involve upgrading curriculum and teaching, providing professional development for teachers, reducing the size of schools, and strengthening the relationship

[1] John Chubb and Terry Moe. *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1990.

between schools, parents, and the broader community.

The essence of public education is that *every* student, regardless of social background, has an entitlement to participate in elementary and secondary schooling. When we use competition and school choice to improve the performance of schools, we introduce powerful incentives for schools to improve their performance, not by improving their teaching, but by selecting students who are "suited" to their teaching. There are ways to protect the less desirable, or "unchosen," students in public school choice programs, but they require careful planning and design. Before we enthusiastically embrace choice and competition as the solution to major problems of public education, we should train a cold eye on the possible negative effects of competition, on ways of addressing those effects, and on the compatibility of choice with the broader purposes of public education.

In What Way is Educational Choice a Question of Federal Policy?

Our research indicates that about 30 states have already passed laws authorizing a variety of choice programs, including within-district choice, between-district choice, programs directed at encouraging drop-outs to return to school, and programs allowing high school students to take courses in post-secondary institutions. While there has been a high level of activity around choice in the states, the laws themselves are quite cautious and set careful limits on the terms under which choice can be exercised. The states seem to be taking a firm and sensible approach to choice.

Given the degree of state-level initiative already being exercised, it is ironic that an administration which gives great deference to the states on matters of education policy would choose to enter an area of demonstrated state leadership.

Traditionally, the most effective role of the federal government in education has been to advocate the interests of those who are often excluded from the benefits of state and local policies. One possible constructive role the federal government might play in educational choice would be to focus serious scrutiny on the operation and effects of state and local choice initiatives and to assure that evidence on their effects is broadly disseminated. It is not clear, for example, that states and localities undertaking choice programs have a strong incentive to protect the interests of those students who, because of their attributes or social background, are likely to present problems to schools. Nor is it clear that states and localities committed to choice programs have strong incentives to present evidence on the negative effects of such programs, as well as their positive effects.

In summary, it is unlikely that choice and competition will, by themselves, result in any significant improvement of public education. In order for choice to have any relationship to quality, states and localities must focus in a sustained way on school improvement—raising the quality of curriculum and teaching, improving professional development for teachers, and significantly altering the structure of existing schools. Choice may complement school improvement; it cannot substitute for it. If the federal government has a major role to play in the choice issue, it is as a relatively objective monitor of the *effects* of choice initiatives focused mainly on the interest of those who are often excluded from the benefits of education.

THE FEDERAL EDUCATION ROLE COMES OF AGE

Denis P. Doyle

"There is nearly universal agreement that our schools are in desperate trouble and must be . . . redesigned from the ground up—but no such agreement as to whose schools should be redesigned, who should do it, and who should pay for it . . . Cosmetic change . . . simply papers over the cracks."

President Bush and Secretary Alexander have a welcome if unexpected friend in Al Shanker, President of the American Federation of teachers. Interviewed on CBS's "Nightwatch," the day *America 2000* was released, Shanker noted that it was an historic announcement: "Never before has a president . . . said the federal government has a major ongoing responsibility for improving elementary and secondary education."

Shanker's observation was in character—statesmanlike, generous and on target. This *is* a first. Historically—from the mid-nineteenth century when the federal role in education began to emerge—to the present, Uncle Sam has been involved with important but narrowly defined subsets of the American population.

Two major phases emerge, the period from the Civil War to the Korean War, and the modern era, from Eisenhower to the present.

The most important enactment of the 19th Century was Justin Morrill's land grant colleges. The creation of a department of education to "collect statistics," and later federal support for vocational education, as a response to the First World War, were modest in comparison. But dwarfing in importance even the land grant colleges was the most important piece of "human capital" legislation ever enacted—the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, the GI Bill (which University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins predicted "would turn American colleges and universities into intellectual hobo jungles." Rarely is a critic so spectacularly wrong.)

It fell to Eisenhower to inaugurate the modern era of federal aid, both broadening and deepening it. It was little noted nor long remembered that Eisenhower's first proposal—for grants to college students (hard on the heels of Sputnik) was rebuffed by the Democratic Congress in favor of loans! No giveaways, argued the Congressional leadership of the day.

But if Eisenhower began the modern era, it was LBJ who gave it its specific contours and size; indeed, his vision of a mixed package of federal aid for elementary and secondary school students, as well as college and university students, was carefully designed to target those most in need: the poor, racial minorities, ethnic minorities. PL 94-142, special education legislation enacted during the Ford Administration, cast a larger net to include other categories of youngsters in need.

Categoricals or entitlements for all students—the norm at the state and local level—were neither sought nor enacted at the federal level. Indeed, the closest thing to general aid at the federal level was the Nixon Administration's support for then Harvard Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan's idea about a national "institute" for education research and improvement.

The maturing social sciences produced the heady notion—heady to intellectuals at least—that R&D could make a difference in the world of social policy. We could actually learn, or discover, or invent "what works," and adopt it (and refine and improve it) as effective social policy. Poverty caused by lack of education? Educate poor people, then. A lack of clarity about just how to educate poor people? Go to the drawing board. Hire social scientists. Enact a program.

As there is many a slip twixt cup and lip, so too was the promise of social science elusive. But nowhere has it proven to be more elusive than in making sense of the set of programs now in place. Title 1 (now Chapter 1), for example, is dearly beloved by Members of Congress, educators, local politicians, school boards and teachers. The fact that Chapter 1 shows "no sustaining effects" raises questions that, unfortunately, are of greater interest to research and policy analysts than policy makers. It is clear to disinterested researchers, for example, that the same funds could be spent much more effectively if some of the program constraints were lifted and flexibility increased, but no lobby—of consequence—supports such changes. Permitting schools to use Chapter 1 funds for after school or summer school programs, for example, is likely to have significantly greater impact than "pull out" programs, whose single virtue is that they are easy to audit.

So, too, we have a fairly clear fix on the nature of the student loan default problem—as we have had for at least six years—yet a solution in that realm is elusive as well. Not for lack of knowledge but lack of resolve.

Are there lessons from these federal experiences that have a bearing on the next round of federal education programs? Might they have a bearing on *American 2000?* In both cases the answer is "yes." The reason is not hard to fathom. Though we think and talk about "research and development" in education, there is precious little of either revealed in the formation of education policy. While there is no lack of good intentions, there is little attention to evidence, or "prototype" development, the process that characterizes other parts of the economy. Historically, most federal education programs have been invented out of whole cloth, the product, as it were, of "thought experiments." Wouldn't it be splendid to improve the education of poor children—and their life chances—by giving them additional, targeted resources? Who could gainsay so morally, educationally and politically compelling an argument? Not many. Certainly not many Members of Congress.

But if we used the same approach in medicine or transportation, high technology or communications, defense or engineering we would properly stand accused of anti-intellectualism or worse. That this short list is made up of "hard disciplines," and education is not, does not justify acting first, studying later. For that is the short history of the federal role. When the natural sequence of scientific and logical implementation is abandoned (moving from "idea" to "preliminary design" to "model" [or prototype] to "field testing" to "recall" to "marketing" to "production"), it is too late to engage in program redesign. The political concrete has set.

Which is precisely the predicament in which the nation now finds itself. There is, for

example, nearly universal agreement that our schools are in desperate trouble and must be "restructured"—which is to say, redesigned from the ground up—but no such agreement as to whose schools should be redesigned, who should do it, and who should pay for it.

If the problem is the desperate need to redesign, then the reigning solution—cosmetic change—cannot, by any standard, be made to work. It simply papers over the cracks. In theory, of course, a school district, or a state, or a consortium of districts and states, could take it upon itself to start from scratch. Easier said than done, however.

One role the federal government played successfully for well over a century is as catalyst for redesign and restructuring; if not in education in other areas. In the nineteenth century with harbors, bridges, canals, railroads, and land grant colleges (with their heavy emphasis on applied research and development); and in the 20th with airports, the interstate highway system, and perhaps most important, heavy duty R&D, basic and applied, in fields as diverse as medicine, agriculture, space and particle physics.

What has this to do with education? Uncle Sam is only indirectly a stakeholder in education. Uncle Sam does not (as a rule) own and operate schools and the federal contribution to states, localities, institutions and individuals, while important, is a paltry sum as measured against overall expenditures for education. The lesson for education should be abundantly clear. Uncle Sam is ideally suited to act, both as stimulus to change and honest broker, as funder—at least of "venture capital"—as the one actor in the system with a truly national, even global, perspective.

What needs doing? Provide the intellectual and political "space," as well as access to resources, to design the "school of the future" from the ground up. A New American Schools Development Corporation, funded by the private sector, will have the flexibility and agility to move rapidly and decisively. It can act as "venture capitalist" in ways the public sector could not. (A little-noted provision in the enabling legislation for the late, unlamented National Institute of Education permitted the Institute to receive gifts, grants and bequests of private funds.)

And a federally-funded 535 + Schools program will permit the R&D vision to become a reality—as states, localities and their communities of parents, teachers and children see those realities. Here is a vision which is at once bold, even daring, one that recognizes the national interest but does not compromise local initiative. To the contrary, it encourages it.

I opened with a quote from Albert Shanker and will close with another of his pearls. He once observed that the trouble with education research is that "all education experiments are doomed to succeed." Prescient, to be sure, and a fate I hope will not befall the Administration's proposals. The federal government can for the first time address the needs and interests of all students—not just the legitimate but limited needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed—without imposing its views, values or standards on the nation and without sinking to a lowest common denominator. *America 2000* reconciles national interest by reinvigorating federalism. Let 535 + flowers bloom!

CHOICE, TESTING AND THE RE-ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT

Gary Orfield

"It has been so long since we have had a serious proposal for a major change in federal education policy that we have come to treat public relations strategies as if they were coherent policies. Old ideas are treated as if they were new."

It has been so long since we have had a serious proposal for a major change in federal education policy that we have come to treat public relations strategies as if they were coherent policies. Old ideas are treated as if they were new.

The country is worried about education and President Bush pledged to be an "education President." At the beginning of his term in January 1989, 74 percent of Americans believed that he would "improve educational standards" but another poll, in March 1991, shortly before his new education strategy was announced, showed that only 52 percent felt he was "making progress."

America 2000 assumes that it is possible to transform American schools without new federal dollars, with no program for minority students or decaying central city schools, and goals much like those of the early Reagan years. After a decade in which large commitments of new resources to conservative policies produced no tangible gains, the President proposes to eliminate all remaining major educational failings by 2000 with no additional money. The plan creates an impression of action; it attempts to select the menu of U.S. education without buying any of the food.

America 2000 rests on a surprising conclusion—that the reform movement triggered by the Reagan Administration failed and wasted a lot of money. Bush promises to accomplish more with much less by specifying the "right goals." President Bush argues that no money is needed because there was a sharp increase in spending (at the state and local levels) during the 1980s. Today, however, there is a manifest financial crisis which the President completely ignores. All across the country, schools are facing cutback and curtailments and there are major legal and political battles over the extreme inequality of funds for low-income districts. Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, all major California cities, some of the largest cities in Ohio, and many other local and state education systems face drastic cuts. Many districts have stopped discussing new ideas and are slashing existing programs and staff thus making the President's argument about existing dollars entirely specious.

We are told that testing, choice, and "break-the-mold schools" are new ideas which can transform American schools by 2000. The intense focus on testing, however, has been growing since the early 1980s; choice, in the form of open enrollment and magnet school programs, goes back to the mid-1960s; and the idea of experimental schools was one of the basic provisions (Title III) of Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, then assailed by the GOP. We have, in fact, created many promising models but lack funds and leadership to expand them.

The limited results of similar efforts in the recent past are simply dismissed. *America 2000* promises to end an "era of heedlessness and neglect." It concludes: "Until last year, few could even describe our education goals. As a nation, we didn't really have any." This after a decade in which enormous efforts were devoted to define goals enshrined in systems of required courses and tests. The excellence movement, hailed as a triumph in the Reagan years, is now seen as a clear failure: "Almost all our education trend lines are flat. Our country is idling its engines . . ." (*America 2000*, p. 5).

Testing proliferated during the 1980s in virtually all states, but had little effect on achievement levels. A strong re-emphasis on standardized tests began in the late 1970s, a central recommendation of the *Nation at Risk* report. Now the President wants a new set of national tests. The 1980s tests were often used to raise standards by flunking children who could not meet certain test scores, a policy that has failed to produce educational gains, increased spending for repeating the same grades of school, and raised dropout rates. Problems with the new national test system include the danger of intensifying curriculum domination by tests, the costs in dollars and school time of more tests, the possibility of bias, and the probability that test scores will be used in misleading ways for inappropriate comparisons of schools and districts. Although these problems may be surmountable, there is little to suggest large benefits from another layer of testing.

Choice has been a basic goal of conservative policy in education since the early Reagan Administration. It is supposed to empower parents and weaken school bureaucracies' control over students. Competitive markets are expected to raise quality. It may be a way, as it is in higher education, of providing some aid to religious schools, a long-time goal of conservative policy.

Choice is a term that is difficult to disagree with in principle, but which has no clear meaning until many blanks are filled in. In other words, it is an almost perfect political concept. When asked whether they favored allowing choice within their district, 65 percent of public school parents said "yes" in a 1990 Gallup survey. Many who support choice in the abstract, however, may want a common core of educational requirements, no subsidies for religious education, maintenance of locally-based schools in their areas, enforcement of civil rights and handicapped rights in all schools receiving public funds, etc. Many who oppose increasing taxes to pay for transportation would also oppose limiting access to schools for students who cannot afford to pay for transportation. Cheap choice plans with little provision for equalizing information among parents and providing transportation are likely to intensify rather than diminish inequality and racial segregation among schools and could leave disadvantaged students in even more inadequate and isolated schools.

Choice as a serious policy for U.S. public schools comes out of the desegregation battle. Its greatest advantages were that it avoided much of the explosive politics involved in forcing white students to leave their neighborhood schools and created new educational options that sometimes became enormously popular. The disadvantages were that choice plans usually had limited success in producing desegregation and they

tended to cost more and create new inequalities within school districts.

The Bush plan promises large impacts because the market mechanism is expected to force improvements, as parents leave weak schools and choose better ones. The argument should be very familiar because it is the deregulation argument that dominated the 1990s. Deregulation of the savings and loan industry, cable television, airlines, telephone systems, and other institutions was expected to produce huge gains in efficiency and service. There have been successes in some areas but also some spectacular failures. The S & L crisis is already the most costly financial disaster in American history. It shows that many business leaders, freed of bureaucratic control, decided to speculate recklessly with other people's money. The airline experiment has reached a point of diminishing competition, virtual regional monopolies, deteriorated service, less convenient schedules for many travelers, strong efforts to distort markets with frequent traveler awards, proprietary reservation systems, predatory local pricing and other market distortions. Congress has conceded the failure of cable TV deregulation and authorized re-regulation. The romance of the self-regulating market place has dimmed considerably.

The school choice debate usually ignores the other major policy areas in which a choice approach has long been dominant and where the Bush Administration is asking for more regulation. Among policies serving the poor, two of the most important are the Medicaid program, which allows people to choose doctors in the free market, and the Pell Grant and Guaranteed Student Loan programs, which enable students to choose colleges and other postsecondary education they would otherwise be unable to afford. These are multi-billion dollar programs based on choice and "self-regulating markets." If Medicaid made the market work for low-income black residents on the South Side of Chicago the quality of health care should have soared as doctors and clinics rushed in to compete for the hundreds of millions of dollars of business. Just the opposite has happened. Medical practitioners have not rushed into the area and many refuse Medicaid patients. Many hospitals and clinics have gone bankrupt and shut their doors, including the city's only black-controlled hospital. Far from efficient, low-cost service, much of the treatment is extremely expensive, highly inefficient, and very inconvenient emergency room treatment of conditions neglected much too long. The system has been far more expensive than predicted, has left tremendous inequalities in place, and has produced a strikingly inferior level of care by decaying institutions. In response, Bush is proposing *more* cost and service regulations.

Pell Grant and student loan experiences are similar. The grants and loans surely helped low-income students to enter college and other forms of training, but they were never able to make access equal for lower-income students. The grants were never set at high enough amounts to permit a full range of choices. Over time, as tuition soared and grants increased less rapidly, the program became more and more limited and, by the mid-1980s, the gains of the previous period were substantially lost. In other words, there is nothing about a choice plan that can really control the cost of the institutions chosen among or which can guarantee that government will provide a level of resources from year to year that enable real choices to be possible. Costs are, by definition, outside government's control while voucher levels are determined not by need, but by political compromise. There is absolutely nothing in a choice system to assure either a full supply of choices at the right price or the level of support needed to make real choices available.

The student aid programs victimize many poorly-informed people who have responded to schools running massive, targeted advertising that often promises huge gains from short-term training. Even though high school graduates have much more education than many poor people who would have to make decisions under a school choice plan, many do not understand that they are signing away their financial aid eligibility for instruction that often has little substance. Many drop out after the money is gone and gain no advantage in the job market.

At the same time that the Bush Administration is touting the free market as the solution for elementary and secondary education, and postulating wonderful new offerings from private schools, it is going in exactly the opposite direction in higher education, asking, quite appropriately, for more bureaucratic controls on quality and effectiveness and for eliminating schools whose graduates do not repay loans. The problems would probably be much more severe in a program aimed at earlier grade levels.

America 2000 is not a plan for American education but a plan for re-electing the President. Its effects on the schools are likely to be exceedingly small.

MUST WE REINVENT THE SCHOOLS?

Gerald N. Tirozzi

"The President and his advisors need to reexamine the landscape. They seem to be looking across educational and social terrain that is different from that which others see."

America 2000 is aimed at helping the nation meet the six National Education Goals by the year 2000. The goals are ambitious and worthy of the commitment of every educator, citizen and political leader. Unfortunately, the President's strategy to achieve the goals falls somewhat short. Like many Americans, I initially embraced the strategy for a number of reasons:

- For a self-proclaimed "education president," Mr. Bush's silence on education had become disquieting. I am delighted that the President has now put education on the front burner.
- President Bush's commitment to world-class educational standards is a timely challenge in a society where global competition is an undisputed reality. The time for rigorous assessment and a set of national examinations clearly has come.
- Citizens need quality indicators to measure progress and demand improvement. The proposed national report card is crucial in the effort to measure achievement of the National Education Goals.

Only a few weeks have passed since *America 2000* was unveiled. The more I and others analyze this education strategy, the more questions arise about its potential to improve public education in a comprehensive way.

America 2000's "school choice" plan is particularly troubling. I believe that a public system of free and equal education is essential in a democracy. I therefore disagree with the President's "school choice" plan, which would potentially funnel public dollars to private and parochial schools. I also question whether private and parochial schools would want public money if it meant adhering to teacher certification and other state and federal regulations. And I would be amazed if any of these institutions would accept *all* students, including those who bring a wide range of challenges to the classroom. I believe the only way they might accept the public dollars would be if they were allowed to continue to be highly selective in student enrollment. This selectivity would result in public schools becoming the schools of last resort. This, in my mind, would be a betrayal of the American dream of access and equity in publicly-funded schools. President Bush likes the idea of school competition, and *America 2000* makes promises of new ventures which—despite his optimism—may or may not work. In the next few years, President Bush proposes to designate 535 schools in the country as "New American Schools," and they will receive $1 million each in one-time grants. These 535 "points of light" may be well-intentioned, but their potential shrinks when you consider that they represent less than one percent of the nation's galaxy of 110,000 schools. I also have a real fear that the selection process will become entangled in political and logistical problems.

The President says he wants business-backed research and development teams to "reinvent the American school." What is worrisome is his strategy's apparent disregard for the many instructional innovations that already have shown success. *America 2000* mentions some examples of these instructional innovations. James Comer's program for disadvantaged students and Henry M. Levin's "accelerated schools," for example, are cited. However, instead of building on these foundations, the President wants to "unleash American genius" in totally redesigning schools. Why doesn't President Bush *concurrently* provide incentives for expansion of these exemplary programs rather than rely *exclusively* on the development of entirely New American Schools? In my view, there is a contradiction in recognizing successful models, but targeting federal dollars solely to develop a new generation of schools.

In developing these new schools, the President advises researchers to disregard "all traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints that conventional schools work under." The "alls" are qualified, however. These new schools aren't supposed to cost any more than current schools. This qualification poses another contradiction: How can researchers disregard all "past practice" when they are leashed in by financial constraints? New money for programs that work, in fact, is the major missing link in the President's budget for 1992. The President supports the savings and loan bailout at a cost estimated as high as $300 billion. But he proposes an increase of only $100 million for Head Start. This is an early childhood program that works, and there are others—for example, the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) on the federal level, and Birth-to-Three programs for developmentally delayed children and their families which Governor Lowell Weicker Jr. has championed on the state level. Such programs have the potential to save a generation of young Americans. Moreover, we know that early intervention saves billions of dollars in subsequent public expense for remedial education, corrections, welfare and other social and health services. Clearly, these early intervention programs should be adequately funded in order to demonstrate a commitment to achieve the first education goal: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." The early intervention programs are not even mentioned in *America 2000*.

While money alone definitely will not solve all our problems, it is essential in some instances. I believe that many people will support a presidential strategy when there is more evidence that he is willing to support the ambitious National Education Goals with adequate dollars. In Connecticut, we also will be more comfortable with the strategy when Washington broadens its perspective of what needs to be accomplished to include the following:

- A broad-based plan to reform urban education. The proposal to single out 535 schoolhouses as "New American Schools" has some value, but we need to reform entire systems. I believe we should start in our neediest urban districts where problems of low achievement, economic deprivation and racial isolation present strong challenges.

- A comprehensive national plan to ensure high-quality teachers for all children. While *America 2000* suggests new professional development and rewards for teachers, the nation needs rigorous screening, particularly in the preparation and induction of teachers, to ensure that high-quality teachers staff the nation's classrooms.
- Better health and nutrition programs for children. There are many problems related to health and development that harm children's readiness for school, interfere with their ability to learn, and weaken their motivation to achieve. Schools should be tapped as a community resource to provide health and nutrition programs.
- A new entitlement program that ensures that every American has an opportunity to become literate. In many cases, there are not enough dollars available to help all the persons who seek adult education. In other cases, the nation does an insufficient job of supporting and motivating adults who need better skills. Access and equal opportunity in adult education—at least to gain the competencies necessary for high school completion—should be the right of every citizen.

America 2000 describes its strategy as ". . . making this land all that it should be." Connecticut is ready and eager to join the President in enabling America to reach its potential, and I applaud him for his leadership. However, the President and his advisors need to reexamine the landscape. They seem to be looking across educational and social terrain that is different from that which others see. Our land is littered with serious and complex problems that the well-intentioned, but limited, *America 2000* can't solve.

America 2000 does offer great potential as a talking point and a launching position for a broader assault on our nation's educational problems. This expanded educational campaign will require the same kind of financial commitment and public will that was exhibited in Operation Desert Storm. Until the President, his advisors, and the public at large acknowledge this reality, America may win a few skirmishes in the battle for educational excellence, but will never win the war.

SCAPEGOATING THE SCHOOLS

George Kaplan

"The reformers are not merely asking the schools to adjust to new demands, as they have always done successfully; instead, we are faced with an all-out "crusade" to turn public education on its head, principally, it appears, to promote our foreign policy interests and the agenda of American business."

The Bush-Alexander plan for "reinventing" American education is an outsiders' blueprint, a design conceived by think-tank strategists and politicians who, collectively, probably haven't spent a week in a public school classroom during the past 20 years. On highly disputable evidence, it blames the public schools for the nation's economic and social ills while ignoring what really needs doing inside the schoolyard fence.

At its core, *America 2000* is mainly about national economic superiority and educational governance. It concerns itself only secondarily with preparing growing young people for healthy lives as informed and responsible citizens. Regrettably, this is not unprecedented. Educational policy at the national level has seldom been an end unto itself. It has traditionally served the needs of other masters: returning World War II veterans through the GI Bill of Rights in 1944, national security at the time of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and equal opportunity for disadvantaged children when Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 as an adjunct to the War on Poverty.

Now, with *America 2000*, international economic competitiveness appears to be the key reason for improving our schools. But this time around, the reformers are not merely asking the schools to adjust to new demands, as they have always done successfully; instead, we are faced with an all-out "crusade" to turn public education on its head, principally, it appears, to promote our foreign policy interests and the agenda of American business. These are perfectly legitimate national objectives, but they should not stand as the rationale for upending our historically effective system of public education. However imposing their problems may be, we cannot risk destroying our schools in order to save them. Nor should education's long-range interests be subordinated to the current imperatives of political or economic policy.

In asking the Congress and the nation for a green light to change the most basic rules of education's game, the Bush Administration is reversing a long Republican history of condemning excessive Washington influence in school matters. Despite its professions of respect for local and state control, Lamar Alexander's crusade is a grab for power, and a very ideological one at that. The separate issues of choice, testing, and research may dominate the content of *America 2000*, but this quintessentially political document has other, equally salient, things on its mind. This is not William Bennett conjuring up a model high school curriculum or railing against spoiled college kids. To Mr. Alexander and his band, the U.S. Department of Education is more than a bully pulpit; it is a critical lever of power and control.

Central to the new strategy is its implicit condemnation of today's public schools, of their supposed lack of purpose and focus, and of the people who run them. It is thus no surprise that *America 2000* came into the public eye without benefit of the experience and insights of school people. Had it been a strategy for reforming, say, law, medicine, science, or business, it is a very safe bet that lawyers, doctors, scientists, and businesspeople would have dominated the process. Yet *America 2000*, like the Charlottesville education summit of September 1989, was hatched without the participation of those who have been closest to public schools: school board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, students, and parents—notably those in urban school districts where problems are the toughest. Sure, there probably are too many bureaucrats in large school systems, as in most big corporations, but this doesn't mean that they don't know their business, or that lay persons know it well enough to shut them out.

Should a national colloquy on the new plan develop, this omission urgently needs correcting. School people at all levels must enter the discussion—during Congressional consideration, through the media, in public forums—in order to restore a necessary balance that has been lost during a decade of bashing administrators, school boards, and teachers for doing their job as well as they could under extraordinarily difficult conditions. A particularly useful contribution could come from educators who are actively involved in the ongoing reform movement and in the thousands of alternative public and private schools that are already doing most of what Secretary Alexander proposes for the "535 + New American Schools." And why, except to promote business interests and soothe Members of Congress, do we need 535 + more? There is already a voluminous literature on every imaginable kind of alternative school. It ought to be digested before we concoct and pay for more.

Under the umbrella of a strategy to "make this land all that it should be," we are asked to accept uncritically the notion that a direct link exists between educational excellence and economic success which, in the context of *America 2000*, means being Number One. But Nobel Prize winner Roald Hoffman and former University of California president Clark Kerr, among others, strongly dispute this assertion. Neither advocates less than excellence in the schools, but neither has found that top educational performance has been a key to economic competitiveness. Hoffman believes that it is "impossible to make a connection between statistics of ignorance and past or future status of a country without consideration of society as a whole . . . the economic system, the history of the country, patterns of immigration, and the psychological forces at play." Kerr echoes this finding, citing reports from the Brookings Institution, MIT, and Princeton that fail to establish more than a shaky tie between productivity and education.

When we assign blame to the schools for America's economic decline, we are guilty of failing to examine the real root causes. The schools could and should be doing better, but so should the rest of society. When Great Britain's economy hit the skids, no one blamed the schools. In the United States,

according to Kerr, "We spent too much of our research-and-development funds on the military . . . We turned too much to easy self-gratification, as in drugs and alcohol and crime, and TV for the children instead of homework . . . We put too much emphasis on advertising and too little on quality in production." Hoffman adds that, while the path to economic and political power "certainly requires a basic level of scientific and technological literacy and fundamental skills on the part of its population," the political system must also furnish "an open mobile society, a superstructure of higher education and industry into which people can move, a society which requires hard work and creativity. With all our faults, this is what we have."[1]

Our obsession with being Number One may be salutary in that it keeps us mentally alert and stimulated (and possibly nervous), but this is not the real business of the schools. Nor is winning the only thing, or the most important. With its rewards for successful schools, the new strategy clearly prizes competition. It could be argued that it treats children as devices, as means to an ultimately competitive economic goal, and places them under excessive stress for highly questionable reasons. The originators of *America 2000* may have envisaged what Alfie Kohn called " . . . a trade-off between learning and winning—and perhaps between education for the benefit of the school and education for the benefit of business." Either way, the potential for scapegoating the schools is unlimited. But no one, especially the children, really wins.

A media analyst once advised education reporters that, before pontificating too dogmatically about schools, they should "get inside the living whale and look around." The same advice would not be wasted on the policy framers and opinion molders whose actions and judgments will so strongly influence the course of public education in the 1990s. Rather than accept at face value the dubious premise that our schools have sunk so deep that they need reinventing, they should find the time to dig for the story behind the story. The search would be worth the trouble.

Though still far from where they should be, public schools in America are doing surprisingly well despite the constantly expanding non-academic levies on them and the chronic financial crises that plague them. According to data contained in *The Condition of Education 1990*, issued by the same U.S. Department of Education that is spearheading *America 2000*, public education in this country is functioning as well as it ever has.

It's time to stop knocking an entire system and start providing the resources to fix the parts that aren't working well enough. We know exactly where they are—right in front of our noses in urban America. They are what *America 2000* and the nation's decision-makers should be worrying about.

---

[1]Roald Hoffman, "Ignorance Ignorantly Judged," *New York Times*, Op. Ed. Page, n.d. and Clark Kerr, *Education Week*, Feb. 27, 1991, p. 30.

THE EDUCATIONAL EQUIVALENT OF WAR?

Michael D. Usdan

"The President's plan sustains the growing sense that improved schools are essential to the national interest but resources are needed: the educational equivalent of our country's determination to put a man on the moon or to win the Gulf War."

Only the President, utilizing his office's unique "bully pulpit," can project important issues nationally. Through the medium of television he can profoundly shape our policy priorities and cultural values. With all respect to the many notable efforts of local and state leaders to achieve educational reform, only the President (particularly a popular one like George Bush) can give the issue of improving schools the national saliency and visibility it warrants.

The President's projection of education as a vital national concern is probably the most important, substantive and symbolic consequence of *America 2000*. Indeed, it could herald a watershed in the history of the federal role in education. For perhaps the first time in our history, we have a President presenting not just a series of discrete programs, but also a vision and strategy to help guide the nation as it struggles with the many complex issues related to school improvement.

Most importantly, the President's plan reaffirms and sustains the growing sense that improved schools are essential to the national interest. It helps to reassert the importance of placing greater value on education and our collective stake in improved schools. The plan builds on the momentum and public consciousness achieved by the Education Summit in Charlottesville in September, 1989, at which the President and the governors reached accord and promulgated the six National Education Goals which have attracted great attention.

While the President's "strategy" is necessarily sketchy at these early stages in its development, there are some particularly positive facets that merit attention. The focus on the need for concerted, community-by-community grass roots involvement reflects the reality that the needed "educational renaissance" cannot be achieved by the schools acting alone; our society confronts increasingly complicated problems attendant to growing numbers of economically disadvantaged children and families. The plan's emphases on the crucial role which must be played by parents and the need for stronger social supports and interagency initiatives underscore the complexity of the issues facing children and families and reinforce the need for collaborative solutions. Several important features of the plan are designed to strengthen the "heart" of America's schools—teaching and learning. It calls for several alternative ways of preparing and certifying teachers and administrators, the involvement of the private sector in research and development, and advocates a national network of demonstration schools.

Indeed, a persuasive case can be made that by merely articulating his concerns and vision about American education, President Bush has performed a singularly important public service by projecting the nation's pressing educational needs in ways that no other individual could.

But is "The Education President's" commitment real? Both research and practical experience show conclusively that the ability of children to learn is predicated heavily on their environment—the social, economic, and health factors which so dramatically impact the very early years of their lives. With almost 40 percent of all children under the age of six currently growing up in poverty or in very marginal economic circumstances, any serious effort to improve education must address the growing problem of children's poverty. To do so will require new resources. Yet, the President's plan is silent on the transcendent demographic imperatives related to the core issue of poverty. Limited resources would be better spent providing universal access to Head Start, WIC, prenatal care, and other successful intervention programs that directly relate to the crucial "learning readiness" goal.

Other concerns about the plan relate to the appropriate roles for government and the private sector. Who should initiate research and development efforts? Schools are a fundamental governmental responsibility and it seems contrary to enlightened public policy to have the private sector "jump-start" an enterprise which must rely on public support. Instead, logic would dictate that the government provide the basic support for an ambitious research and development infrastructure, and use private funding to supplement and enhance. The private sector may well have the requisite speed, flexibility, technical capacity, and resources to address dire educational research and development needs. But the government cannot and should not abdicate its fundamental responsibility in a critically important realm like educational research and development.

A related concern is how the 535+ New American Schools and the new business-funded New American Schools Development Corporation (responsible for developing three to seven research and development think tanks) envisioned by the President connect to the myriad extant efforts to improve education. How will this "new generation of schools" link with the existing research and development centers spread throughout the land and with the promising new school organizational practices being pioneered by respected academics like James Comer, Ted Sizer and Henry Levin?

The President's plan may also be sharply criticized as drawing attention away from the basic issue of why so many of our students aren't learning. Critics contend that the inordinate focus on choice and testing are diversionary. Students in nations like Japan and Germany learn not because of exemplary choice and testing programs but because education is valued greatly in those societies. Teachers and others involved in the schooling enterprise are esteemed members of the society and have pride and enthusiasm for their work, as well as high expectations and standards for their students.

While there is growing support for a national examination system, the plan's emphasis on testing has exacerbated concerns about the need to develop carefully a set of tests that are better measures than the current, inadequate multiple choice instruments. There is an emerging consensus that more varied performance-based measures

must be designed. But performance-based measures such as portfolios will require a substantial investment. The President's plan makes no provision for such an investment and reinforces the danger that the immediate demand for accountability and student output measures will buttress in negative ways the importance of the existing, inadequate, uni-dimensional standardized testing system.

The choice issue, in particular, precipitates great concern. Opponents of choice, as ostensibly supported by the President, fear that the implementation of a free market system will drain resources from the public schools, particularly in hard pressed core cities. The focus on choice as a millennial solution or "quick-fix" to a very complex set of issues has served to polarize groups and individuals in dysfunctional ways. Although choice is only one of several strategies in the President's plan, its inclusion automatically "rattles the cages" of many people.

The President's initiative brings visibility and saliency to schools and educational issues. But that is not enough. In an increasingly shrinking and economically competitive world, how long can our national government remain on the sidelines as a scorekeeper and/or a cheerleader? Not just rhetoric but resources are needed: the educational equivalent of our country's determination to put a man on the moon or to win the war in the Persian Gulf. It is imperative that the federal government and the private sector become partners and actively engage in a collaboratively financed "crash" research and development program which will synthesize what we know about teaching and learning. If the crisis is as real as our political and business leaders indicate, can the nation and its top leadership afford to do anything less?

MEASURING SCHOOLS IS NOT THE SAME AS IMPROVING THEM

Linda Darling-Hammond

"As a top-down initiative based on current, primarily multiple-choice, testing technologies, the "American Achievement Tests" would be far behind the innovations already being pursued in many states and localities and could undermine these efforts."

Recent state and local efforts to improve American schools have increasingly employed standardized tests as measures of student achievement and as arbiters of decisions about student placements, teacher competence, and school quality. Some policy makers have also sought to use tests to "hold schools accountable" by triggering rewards, sanctions, or remedial actions.

President Bush's *America 2000* proposes to extend these efforts to the federal level through the establishment of a national test. The evidence now available, however, suggests that, by and large, these testing policies have not had many of the positive effects that were intended for them, while they clearly have had many negative consequences for the quality of American schooling and for the equitable allocation of school opportunities. As policy discussion moves forward regarding the wisdom of national examinations, the lessons learned from our previous experiences with testing as a policy tool need to be incorporated in a new approach to assessment that holds greater promise for improving teaching and learning.

The Problems with American Tests

In contrast to testing in most other countries, American testing is dominated by norm-referenced, multiple-choice instruments designed to rank students cheaply and efficiently. These instruments were initially created to make tracking and sorting of students more efficient; they were not designed to support or enhance instruction. Because of the way the tests are constructed, they exclude a great many kinds of knowledge and types of performance we expect from students, placing test-takers in a passive, reactive role, rather than one which engages their capacities to think critically, structure tasks, produce ideas, and solve problems.[1]

These shortcomings of American tests have become more problematic as test scores have been used to make important educational decisions. As schools have begun to "teach to the tests," the scores have become ever-poorer assessments of students' overall abilities. This is because classwork oriented toward recognizing the answers to multiple-choice questions does not heighten students' proficiency in aspects of the subjects which are not tested, such as analysis, complex problem-solving, and written and oral expression.[2] Many studies have found that because of classroom emphasis on multiple-choice basic skills tests, American students listen, read short sections in textbooks, respond briefly to questions, and take short-answer and multiple-choice quizzes. They rarely plan or initiate anything, create their own products, read or write anything substantial, engage in analytic discussions or undertake projects requiring research, invention, or problem-solving.[3]

The results can be seen in U.S. achievement trends. Since about 1970, basic skills test scores have been increasing while scores on assessments of higher order thinking have been steadily declining in virtually all subject areas.[4] Officials of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the National Research Council, and the National Councils of Teachers of English and Mathematics, among others, have all attributed this decline to the schools' marked emphasis on tests of basic skills.

As the National Assessment of Educational Progress found: "Only 5 to 10 percent of students can move beyond initial readings of a test; most seem genuinely puzzled at requests to explain or defend their points of view." The NAEP assessors explained that current methods of teaching and testing reading require short responses and lower-level cognitive thinking, resulting in "an emphasis on shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoned and disciplined thought. . . , (thus) it is not surprising that students fail to develop more comprehensive thinking and analytic skills."[5] The same kinds of problems with rote-oriented instruction aimed at basic skills tests account as well for American students' consistently poor showing on international assessments of achievement in mathematics and science.[6]

In many respects, the effects of test misuse have been most unfortunate for the students they were most intended to help. Many studies have found that students placed in the lowest tracks or in remedial programs are most apt to experience instruction geared only to multiple-choice tests, working at a low cognitive level on test-oriented tasks that are profoundly disconnected from the skills they need to learn. Rarely are they given the opportunity to talk about what they know, to read real books, to write, to construct and solve problems in mathematics, science, or other subjects.[7] In short, they are denied the opportunity to develop the capacities they will need for the future, in large part because our tests are so firmly pointed at educational goals of the past.

---

[1]National Research Council, *Ability Testing: Uses, Consequences, and Controversies*. Alexandra K. Wigdor and Wendell R. Garner (eds.) Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1982.

[2]Walter Haney and George Madaus, *Effects of Standardized Testing and the Future of the National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Working paper prepared for the NAEP Study Group. Chestnut MA: Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy; Daniel Koretz, "Arriving in Lake Wobegon: Are Standardized Tests Exaggerating Achievement and Distorting Instruction?" *American Educator, 12* (2), pp. 8–15, 46–52; Linda Darling-Hammond and Arthur E. Wise, "Beyond Standardization: State Standards and School Improvement," *Elementary School Journal, 85* (3), pp. 315–336.

[3]Ernest L. Boyer, *High School* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983); John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); Linda Darling-Hammond and Arthur E. Wise, *op. cit.*

[4]Educational Testing Service, *Crossroads in American education* (Princeton: ETS, 1989).

[5]National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Reading, Thinking, and Writing: Results from the 1979–80 National Assessment of Reading and Literature* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1981).

[6]Educational Testing Service, *A World of Differences: An International Assessment of Mathematics and Science* (Princeton: ETS, 1989); C.C. McKnight, F.J. Crosswhite, J.A. Dossey, E. Kifer, S.O. Swafford, K.J. Travers, and T.J. Cooney, *The Underachieving Curriculum: Assessing U.S. School Mathematics from an International Perspective* (Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing, 1987).

[7]Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985); Eric Cooper and J. Sherk, "Addressing Urban School Reform: Issues and Alliances," *Journal of Negro Education, 58* (3), 1989, pp. 315–331; K. Trimble and R.L. Sinclair, "Ability Grouping and Differing Conditions for Learning: An Analysis of Content and Instruction in Ability Grouped Classes." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, 1986.

Improving American Assessment

Recognizing these problems, many schools, districts, and states have recently begun to develop different forms of assessment for students. School districts such as Pittsburgh and Albuquerque, along with states like Vermont, California, Connecticut, Maryland, and New York are developing approaches much like the assessment systems that prevail in many other countries around the world. These include essay examinations, research projects, scientific experiments, exhibitions and performances in areas like debating and the arts. They also include portfolios of students' best work in various subject areas, and projects that require analysis, investigation, experimentation, cooperation, and written, oral, or graphic presentation of findings.

In contrast to multiple-choice standardized tests, these assessment strategies present ill-structured problems that require students to think analytically and demonstrate their proficiency as they would in real-life performance situations. They include many different types of tasks conducted within the classroom over many months or years as well as within examination settings. As in many other countries, assessment occasions often require students to respond to questions from external examiners, thus helping them learn to think through and defend their views.[8]

Initiatives such as these are attempting to make schools genuinely accountable for helping students to acquire the kinds of higher-order skills and abilities they will need to use in the world outside of school. Many of these initiatives also share another important characteristic of other countries' examinations: they involve teachers in developing and scoring the assessments, in supervising the development of student work for portfolios, and in examining their own students and those of teachers in other schools. Thus, assessment is tied directly to instruction and to the improvement of practice, creating greater knowledge and shared standards across the educational enterprise as a whole.

These initiatives will falter or flourish depending on the directions taken by federal and state policy makers looking for progress on the national goals. Some proposals for a national assessment *system* (as opposed to a national test) would build upon these initiatives, encouraging further local and regional development in the spirit of American creativity and diversity, and creating methods, like those used in some countries abroad, for calibrating the various assessments to a national standard. This approach is implied in some of the recommendations developed by the National Education Goals Panel. Research that could lead to such a system is being pursued at the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center and elsewhere.

However, *the President's proposal for a national test, as it is currently outlined, would turn the clock backward on efforts to reform American testing and American education.* As a top-down initiative based on current, primarily multiple-choice, testing technologies, the "American Achievement Tests" would be far behind the innovations already being pursued in many states and localities and could undermine these efforts. (The frameworks for the existing National Assessment of Educational Progress are proposed as the basis for the "new" American Achievement Tests. Within the proposed time frame of only 18 months, it is certain no major changes in testing technology could be accomplished or launched.)[9]

Rather than supporting the American tradition of experimentation and local control, *the proposed national test would create a de facto national curriculum, and a fairly limited one at that.* This kind of national test would be likely to stifle further curriculum reform, and by failing to involve teachers or principals in a more pervasive, local, school-based assessment process, it would lose the opportunity to encourage meaningful instructional improvement.

Equally dangerous is the President's proposal that some federal funds be allocated based on schools' scores on the new national test. Far from stimulating school improvement, this simplistic use of test results would create perverse incentives for schools to exclude low-scoring students and for talented staff to avoid teaching in challenging schools. There is no reason capable staff should risk losing rewards or incurring sanctions by volunteering to teach where many students have special needs and where performance standards will be more difficult to attain. This will even further compromise the educational chances of disadvantaged students, who are already served by a disproportionate share of teachers who are inexperienced, unprepared, and underqualified.[10]

These kinds of perverse policies create incentives for schools to keep out students whom they fear may lower their average scores—children who are handicapped, limited English-speaking, or from educationally disadvantaged environments. This kind of reward system confuses the quality of education offered by schools with the needs of the students they enroll. It will work against equity and integration, and against any possibilities for fair and open school choice, by discouraging good schools from opening their doors to educationally needy students. The approach will surely undermine rather than enhance accountability, since it pretends that merely measuring schools is the same thing as actually improving them.

In the long run, assessment cannot be a constructive lever for reform unless we invest in more educationally useful and valid measures of student learning. Rushing to create a national test in the image of our current tests will only slow our progress toward better grounded and more challenging approaches to teaching and learning. Investing in the creation of authentic assessments of students' actual performance abilities is a strategy with much greater potential benefit in the long run. It must also be said, however, that assessments of any kind will not be sufficient to stimulate all the changes and improvements America needs and wants from her schools.[11] Investing in the instructional capacities of the schools themselves, and in the welfare of the students they serve, will be a necessary foundation for the success of other educational reforms aimed at inventing a system of American education for the 21st century.

[8]Douglas Archbald and Fred M. Newmann, *Beyond Standardized Testing: Assessing Authentic Academic Achievement in the Secondary School*. (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1988).

[9]For many reasons, including costs, continuity with past tests, and needed connections to current teaching practice, the NAEP cannot reflect the state of the art in modern assessment. Equally important is the fact that as soon as the NAEP becomes a high-stakes test which schools will feel obliged to "teach to," it will lose its value as a national indicator of progress toward our educational goals. For explanations of how test validity is impaired by efforts to teach to the test, see Haney and Madaus, *op. cit.*; Koretz, *op. cit.*

[10]Jeannie Oakes, *Multiplying Inequalities: The Unequal Distribution of Mathematics and Science Opportunities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1990); Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Equality," in John Goodlad and Pamela Keating (eds.), *Access to Knowledge: An Agenda for our Nation's Schools* (New York: College Board, 1990).

[11]Linda Darling-Hammond, "Achieving our Goals: Superficial or Structural Reforms," *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1990, pp. 286–295.

THE MANY-SIDED DILEMMAS OF TESTING

Jeannie Oakes

"In U.S. schools, then, the pattern is clear: low test scores lead to the closing down, rather than the opening up, of opportunities for disadvantaged and minority students."

Test-driven school improvement has caught the fancy of highly-placed education reform advocates. Last summer, *America's Choice* launched the National Center for Education and the Economy's (NCEE) campaign to redirect K–12 education toward all students' attainment of a test-based Certificate of Initial Mastery by age 16. Over the past several months, the Department of Labor's SCANS Commission has shaped its proposal for a set of technical and professional certificates for non-college-bound students to earn and present to prospective employers as test-based evidence of their work readiness. And now—the President's American Achievement Tests.

The reasoning behind these plans goes something like this: A national examination and certification system will pressure schools to improve; entice students to put forth more effort; and, thereby, raise student achievement. These changes, in turn, will lead to a more skilled, productive, and competitive workforce; and, ultimately, in the words of NCEE chair John Sculley's letter to the editor in *The Atlantic* (May 1991), "guarantee the quality of life for us and future generations."

Many analysts question the soundness of this reasoning, pointing to the absence of evidence that the proliferation of testing and credentialling over the past 20 years has led to improved schooling, greater student effort, or higher achievement and economic productivity. In this paper, I focus on a related concern—the likely negative consequence of test-driven school reforms on students, particularly those from low-income families, African-Americans, and Latinos.

Attempts to leverage school improvement by testing and certifying students place on American students the burden of proving the soundness of this experimental approach to educational and economic improvement. Moreover, this burden of proof carries with it very high stakes. As proposed, test-based certification, or the lack of it, will either open or close doors to further education and jobs. Thus, American school children will be saddled with unjustifiable consequences should the reasoning behind these schemes be faulty, or should their development and implementation be flawed.

Two features of U.S. schooling make negative consequences almost inevitable for substantial proportions of the student population and caution against asking students to prove their competence in such high-stakes testing and certification programs:

- The uneven distribution of resources and opportunities, in which disadvantaged and minority students nearly always get less; and
- The propensity to use test results to close off, rather than open up, future opportunities for these same students.

Uneven Distribution of Resources and Opportunities

Most low-income and minority children attend schools that spend less than do schools attended by their more advantaged peers. In some states per-pupil expenditures differ between neighboring high-and-low-wealth districts by a factor of three or more. Such inequalities persist even in many states where reforms have attempted to equalize resources. As a consequence, some students have less access than their more advantaged counterparts to well-maintained facilities, smaller classes, and equipment and materials. Such resources inevitably affect each school's ability to help students develop academic and workplace competencies.

In addition to fewer resources, schools with large concentrations of low-income youngsters, African-Americans and Latinos typically provide less rich and demanding academic programs. In a study conducted for the National Science Foundation, *Multiplying Inequalities* (Rand, 1990), I found that students in minority schools have limited access to rigorous courses, particularly critical "gatekeeping" courses such as algebra in junior high and calculus in senior high. Moreover, teachers at these schools place less emphasis on essential curriculum goals, for example, developing inquiry and problem-solving skills, and they offer fewer opportunities for students to become actively engaged in learning. Such differences extend beyond academic programs. The recent *National Assessment of Vocational Education* found that schools with large disadvantaged populations tend to have the weakest vocational programs.

Making matters worse, disadvantaged students have less contact with well-qualified teachers. High-minority and high-poverty schools suffer more teaching vacancies, and principals have a tougher time filling them with qualified teachers. Students at affluent, white, suburban schools are far more likely to have teachers who are certified, hold bachelors or masters degrees in their teaching fields, or meet qualifications set by teachers' professional associations, particularly in fields experiencing shortages, such as math and science.

An even distribution of resources, programs, and teachers won't, by itself, guarantee that students will learn equally well. However, there are compelling reasons for policy makers to focus on the fair distribution of resources, rather than on testing and certifying children.

Test Results Close Down, Rather Than Open Up, Opportunities for Disadvantaged Students

Partly because low-income and minority students tend to score lower on tests, schools judge them to be less capable of learning. These lower expectations further limit opportunities. Disproportionately, students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are placed in vocational, rather than college preparatory, tracks and in low-level academic classes. In racially-mixed schools, minority students are overrepresented in low-level classes and underrepresented in advanced courses and programs for the gifted.

In U.S. schools, then, the pattern is clear: low test scores lead to the closing down, rather than the opening up, of opportunities for disadvantaged and minority students. Judgements that lower scoring students are "less able" and their placements in low-level courses compound the problems posed by the uneven distribution of curriculum

resources, instructional strategies, and teachers that we find among different schools. Once labeled and placed in low-tracks, students' opportunities to learn diminish significantly.

Teachers typically provide low-track classes with little exposure to rigorous academic content, and they seldom ask them to grapple with material requiring critical thinking or problem solving. Low-track teachers less frequently design engaging, hands-on lessons, and they more often ask students to work alone—reading textbooks or filling out worksheets. Such differences can't be justified as an appropriate tailoring of lessons to the needs of students at different ability levels. On the contrary, students in typical low-track classes simply have less exposure to instruction likely to help them become literate, critical thinkers, and productive members of a technological workforce.

These disadvantages may result, in part, from schools' tendency to assign their least qualified teachers to low-ability classes. In racially-mixed schools, then, the disproportionate assignment of minority students to low-track classes also burdens them with less-qualified teachers. (However, given the shortage of well-qualified teachers at disadvantaged schools, even their highest-track students are often taught by less qualified teachers than are the lowest-track students in advantaged, white schools.)

The bottom line is that the differentiation of resources and opportunities—triggered, in part, by testing—widens the achievement gap between students judged to be more and less able between the advantaged and disadvantaged.

Implications for Test-Driven Improvement Strategies

The uneven distribution of schooling resources and opportunities—partly on the basis of test scores—tells a disturbing story of how access to the knowledge and skills required to perform well on newly-proposed national tests intersects with students' race, social class, and community. Importantly, because schools often judge low-income and minority students to have "low ability," many of these students suffer the double disadvantage of being in schools that offer less, and in classrooms that expect less.

Such inequalities arise from complex educational and political problems. Schools serving large concentrations of children from poor families, African-Americans and Latinos often lack the political clout necessary to command resources equal to those of other schools. Teachers often view these schools as less desirable places to teach, partly because of the economic and social disadvantages that shape their students' lives. These schools often pay teachers less than surrounding suburban schools and offer poorer working conditions (e.g., supplies, materials, physical facilities, etc.). As a result, these schools have far greater difficulty attracting and retaining well-qualified teachers. Moreover, a climate of low expectations for low-income, minority children limits the richness and rigor of the curriculum these schools provide.

Within schools, many educators believe they base decisions about the distribution of curriculum and teaching on educationally sound criteria. For example, given an uneven teaching staff, high schools often decide that able students who are studying traditional college-preparatory content need teachers with stronger preparation than do less-able students who are struggling to understand fundamental processes. Of course, this assumption can be countered by the fact that unprepared teachers are least well equipped to diagnose students' learning problems and design activities to overcome them. However, most schools opt for a "rich-get-richer" pattern of allocating curriculum and teaching resources and opportunities. Politics play a part here, too. Parents of the highest achieving children in the school often exert tremendous pressure to maintain curriculum and instructional advantages for their children.

National testing advocates have been curiously silent about the implications of these inequalities for their reform strategies. Yet, other policy makers must not be. They must argue strongly for safeguards against unfair testing and certification and the further inequities they may trigger. At the least, policy makers must guarantee all students an equal opportunity to become academically competent and workforce-ready. This guarantee and the tough political decisions it requires must precede any plan that places the burden of proof for school reform on the test scores of American children.

A CASE OF MISPLACED EMPHASIS

Michael Timpane

"To talk only of assessments and choice and alternative programs, with no mention of those who must implement new visions of education, is to suggest a fundamental lack of trust in the two-and-a-half million educators in our classrooms and schools."

President Bush and Secretary Alexander have raised the national educational debate to a new level of intensity. With the nation urging him to be as passionate in addressing domestic problems as he was in pursuing the Gulf War and other foreign policy initiatives, the President chose to focus first and foremost on education. In doing so, he brought with him the governors of the fifty states and the leadership of the business community. This certainly puts the issue of education on the front burner, but it does other positive things as well. It shakes the complacency of a nation that thinks our schools are good enough. It shakes the complacency of the educational establishment by posing the distinct possibility that the nation's reform agenda will not be the one for which it had hoped. Moreover, as we can see from the initial Congressional response, it cannot, at least initially, be construed as a partisan program. There is significant support in both parties for new initiatives addressing national assessment and choice, if not for the exact initiatives called for by the President. Thus, the President's proposals cannot be ignored; and they should be vigorously and systematically debated.

Every issue raised in the President's plan is important and worth our attention. That is encouraging. But what is discouraging is the misplaced emphasis on some issues (as in choice, for example), and the fact that some, such as the plight of the children in our cities' schools, are addressed only indirectly, if it all.

The President has emphasized school-site reform, though his approaches to it, in the form of choice and the New American Schools, are controversial. In New American Schools, he has proposed a vigorous program of experimental development—always a good thing in a system of over 100,000 schools all too prone to settle for conventional approaches to education and teaching which are increasingly inappropriate for the students and problems of tomorrow. He has outlined his hopes for the creation of life-long learning systems. This is one area in which the United States is ahead of its competitors, who have not developed second- and third-chance opportunities for learning as much as we have throughout our education and training systems. In its discussion of learning communities, the Administration has pointed to one of the most alarming aspects of the contemporary education scene: the distressingly inadequate involvement of parents and community leaders in the education of our children. He has also emphasized the need to extend our conception of education well beyond the walls of the school to encompass everything that communities do, for good or ill, to educate, miseducate, or fail to educate children.

Taken together, the President's provisions provide a useful point of departure for those seeking a new vision of America's educational future. But it must also be said that there are emphases and omissions in the President's plan which will need to be corrected or changed before the American people are likely to respond to his plea and set forth, under his leadership, to create the schools we all believe we need. My suggestions for immediate response are these.

First, we must be cautious in the movement toward national tests. The time has come for the nation to commit itself to a set of national education goals and to the high standards of school achievement that will be needed to accomplish them. But we must make good headway in defining these goals and enabling states and localities to execute their distinctive ways of meeting them through curriculum guidelines and standards before we define any system of national tests. The tests will not fully track what is taught, and they will distort and even dictate the standards. We know that the tests we have today are not adequate to measure progress toward the kinds of goals now being considered. We also know that too often the significance of the tests is exaggerated—instructional patterns are changed so that students will score higher on them, and the results are misused as a means of labeling and tracking children who score poorly. And we know, finally, that awarding funds on the basis of test results creates perverse and dangerous incentives. Expanded national assessments may be necessary, even desirable, but they are not sufficient to encourage and ensure greater learning, and they could be harmful if hastily imposed.

Second, we must be skeptical about parental choice as a panacea. Over the past fifteen years, many varieties of choice, student and parental, have been invented, ranging from magnet and alternative schools, to theme schools and schools-within-schools, to more flexible assignment and reassignment policies. These programs have been beneficial for many children, and have probably served to keep other parts of the education system on their toes. Now, however, the President is proposing to open up the entire American education system, public and private, to choice. Most of the arguments for this degree of educational choice are ideological or analogical; there is little direct evidence that widespread choice would be beneficial, and its potential dangers are grave. Choice is not the first need of children in poverty, especially children in our cities. These children need good schools that respond to their lives and hopes. It is the unfortunate case that we have many schools that no one would choose and many families, especially the most devastated, with few resources for choosing wisely. In these circumstances, educational choice would increase inequities in our schools rather than diminish them. Before we convert Chapter 1 into a choice-driven program, we must make every school worth choosing, and there should be a clear indication that choice will distribute the benefits of education more equitably. In such a world, choice would be less dangerous and less necessary. For now, let us foster pilot projects of choice along with other strategies for change.

Third, we should make new federal investments in education. Education does not want or need a blank check, but dollars do help educate children. It is wrong-headed to

suggest that the greatest problem in education is not knowing what to do and that we must wait for privately-funded design teams to come up with ideas. There are many good ideas already in practice, including those championed by Ted Sizer, James Comer, Bob Slavin and many others. Our problem is learning how to shepherd these ideas through unwieldy bureaucracies to principals and teachers in every school, people who are just beginning to believe they can take charge of their professional lives and their schools. Using the Chapter 1 framework, we can run a competitive grants program right now, à la Follow Through, to get several of these designs more widely adopted in schools serving poor and disadvantaged children. But we must start on this path immediately, not sometime in the future. And public money should pave the way. It will be heartening to see the business community respond so generously to the call for $150–200 million to support educational experimentation, but how shall we maintain a *public agenda* for such efforts if all the money to support it is privately raised and spent? There is no reason why choice should receive generous federal financial support when research and experimentation does not; in fact, the opposite should be true.

Fourth, we should accomplish full funding for Head Start. Readiness for schooling, the first of the President's education goals, is not addressed by his strategic proposals. We must expand Head Start swiftly to embrace every eligible child, and keep the question of early readiness central to the design of educational reforms.

Fifth, philosophical questions should enter the debate. Do we believe and trust America's educators? They deserve and must have our support, just as any proposed reform must have theirs if it is to succeed. It is the people working in our schools, those who have received specialized professional preparation, who must develop and execute better programs; this responsibility cannot be assigned to outside experts or to the market. To talk only of assessments and choice and alternative programs, with no mention of those who must implement new visions of education, is to suggest a fundamental lack of trust in the two-and-a-half million educators in our classrooms and schools.

Finally, we must ask how shall we carry forward the great civic mission of American education, which has, as Lawrence Cremin said, "proffered a sense of comity, community and common aspirations to the population at large and in so doing continued to transmit and transform the American paideia"? The President's language of achievement, assessment, and choice stresses the individual, rather than the civic and communal, dimensions of education. We must attend to both.

How should we proceed? The components of a thoughtful Congressional response should include:

- **Extensive staff research and hearings on proposals for national assessment** and testing, intended to have the kind of educational impact that former Senator Mondale's subcommittee on children's programs produced two decades ago;
- **Pilot testing authority for choice programs** but not incentive grants for state and local choice policies;
- **A competitive grants program**, perhaps in a modified Follow Through format, to install successful models for at-risk children in schools that serve them;
- **A request for more specific Administration proposals concerning life-long learning** programs and learning communities, so that federal program support can be specified and appropriately funded;
- **Convincing evidence** that each aspect of the President's program will substantially benefit those children most in need.

"TESTING, TESTING, One, Two, Three. . ."

Marshall S. Smith

"The issue of national testing goes well beyond testing itself. Is the new proposal a backdoor into a national curriculum or perhaps a set of "mini-national curricula?"

One highlight of the President's plan is the "American Achievement Tests" (AAT), a voluntary set of national tests to be given in the 4th, 8th and 12th grades in five core academic subject areas. As planned, these tests will embody new standards for school performance and monitor the country's progress toward achievement of the National Education Goals for the year 2000, announced 20 months ago by the President and governors. But the intention is that these tests will go well beyond monitoring. According to Alexander, the AATs will also "be designed to foster good teaching and learning." Moreover, the use of multiple versions of the test implies a system sensitive to local needs and differences throughout the nation and calls for a system of examinations administered by individual states or clusters of states. This system would assess the progress of individual students and schools in states within each cluster. These "separate" systems would be "anchored" by a calibration mechanism, allowing comparisons among the clusters of states, and a national focus on the common set of "New World Standards."

This complex scheme represents an attempt to simultaneously balance the American passion for local political institutions with the belief that national action is necessary to meet the crisis in the quality of the nation's education system. Though running the risk of simplification by political demands for quick results, the design has already heightened national discussion of system wide reform.

Toward A National Examination System

Alexander's plan is the latest in a series of attempts to establish a national American test. A decade ago, President Carter proposed a national examination. He dropped the proposal, however, after objections from educators and others that a national test might lead to a national curriculum.[1] Nonetheless, the notion has persisted. By 1988 a Gallup poll found that 77 percent of Americans supported required national testing.[2]

In the past twelve months, the national test idea has taken off like a rocket. The groups currently exploring the idea span the elite of the business and political communities. Perhaps the most important is the *National Goals Panel*, chaired by Governor Romer of Colorado. Its bi-partisan composition includes three governors, key Administration officials, and ex officio Congressional representation. Committee hearings on national testing have been held in both the House and the Senate.

The national test rocket has not been launched in a vacuum. Fueled by poor international comparisons on achievement tests and by business sector claims that high school graduates are ill-prepared for work, nationalizing influences on education have sprung up on many fronts. Besides the national education summit goals, national curriculum specifications have been proposed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Research Council's Mathematical Sciences Education Board, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. While these activities are "national" in scope, they are not federally-sponsored or controlled. Ironically, national education efforts increased during the Reagan years despite Administration attempts to decrease federal involvement.

A national test for students is an obvious elixir for many politicians. It fits the American political habit of looking for an inexpensive, quick fix. It conveys "toughness" in terms like "accountability," "quality control" and "benchmarking" and its potential for merging national goals and standards with more localized specifications and control is politically appealing.

A National Test—To What End?

What would be the function(s) of a new national test? How does the current National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fit with the designs of national test advocates? And what are the implications of a national test for school reform? For answers, we must sort out the purposes of testing.

Most testing takes place at the classroom level. It is tailored by the teacher to provide regular feedback and diagnostic information. National level testing is not intended to serve this function. National tests could serve three other major purposes, however:

1. **National tests could monitor the condition of education**—or more particularly, the progress of student achievement—for the country as a whole, for states and districts and even for schools and classrooms. To achieve this purpose it is not necessary to maintain or report information on individual students, but only on *samples* of students at the various levels of the system. NAEP currently fills this assessment role at a national level, and both Congress and the Bush Administration are supporting a trial system to use NAEP to track *state-level* achievement. With some changes in its structure and content, NAEP could effectively track the country's effort to achieve the National Educational Goals. Finally, NAEP provides a ready structure for developing comparisons of the achievement of America's students with students from other nations.

2. **National tests could be used to inform decisions about the educational future of individual students.** These decisions require individual student scores and include placement in secondary school tracks, college admissions, and even employment opportunities. Tests used for this purpose are often called "high stakes" tests because they help determine the life-chances of students. In the U.S., high stakes tests, such as the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), are typically very general and are not intended to assess directly the students' mastery of the curricula of the schools.

[1]See Joseph A. Califano Jr. *Governing America: An Insider's Report from the White House and the Cabinet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981)

[2]Stanley M. Elam and Alex M. Gallup, "The 21st Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public School," *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 71, No. 1, September 1989, pp. 41-56.

In many other developed nations, the situation is quite different. "High stakes testing" consists of a series of examinations explicitly designed to assess how well students have mastered a common body of material that has been publicly set out in the curriculum of the schools. The schools teach the material in this common curriculum, and the students study for the examinations as part of the regular business of going to school. Perhaps the closest U.S. example is the Advanced Placement Examinations (AP). College-bound students in AP courses study and prepare in school for the AP examinations as do students in other nations for their examinations. This link between coursework and test content is believed to motivate students to study harder and better master the curriculum. Of course, the schools in other nations operate from a common curriculum while there is no commonly agreed upon, public curriculum in this country.

3. National tests could be used for institutional "accountability." Accountability in this sense means that the institutions would be held responsible for achievement of some set of standards. Rewards and/or sanctions would be applied contingent upon the success of the institution. "High stakes" examinations meet this accountability purpose for students. Schools, districts, and states might be held accountable on the basis of test results used either for monitoring purposes or for student "high stakes" purposes. America's passion—not shared with other nations—for trying to hold educational institutions accountable has been extraordinarily unproductive for reasons I suggest below.

NAEP now serves the monitoring function. Many national test advocates, however, want an examination system that will also perform the motivating, "high stakes" and accountability functions. The Administration and the Goals Panel seem to be seeking a system of tests that will simultaneously perform all three. NAEP, as currently designed and administered, however, cannot and should not go beyond monitoring. Because of the way NAEP is constructed, reliable scores for individual students, classrooms, and even schools (when they are small) cannot be determined. Individual students take different parts of each NAEP exam and then scores are aggregated over a sufficiently large sample to provide reliable information. Substantial changes would have to be made in NAEP for it to be used at the student and school level.

However, even if NAEP were so modified, it still would not accomplish all three functions. Using a national examination to motivate and hold accountable both students and educational institutions implies a test for which students can study. This, in turn, implies that the content of the test has strong links to the curriculum of the schools. One major reason for the failure of our nation's present system of educational accountability is the lack of congruence between the content of the tests being used and the content of the curriculum that students are taught. *It is difficult to imagine having legitimate accountability unless the accountability measure and the curriculum are clearly linked.* Simply put, students cannot be held legitimately accountable for knowing content and skills which they have not been taught. Nor can teachers and schools be held accountable for teaching content and skills they have not been asked, trained, and equipped to teach. Finally, if an exam is to motivate students to study harder and teachers to teach more effectively, there must be a clear connection between increased efforts and improved performance.

How can linkage be created between a national test and school instruction in a nation that has no common national curriculum and that values diversity? A partial solution, as proposed by the Administration and the Romer Panel, may be to devise different sets of examinations for different states or regions of the nation, each of which can be calibrated against the AATs. A system of different sets of examinations, however, does not overcome the problem of having to link the assessments to the curriculum. In effect, then, if the new examinations are to meet their intended purposes, each set must be closely aligned to one of a number of mini-national curricula. In turn, each set must be calibrated to a common set of "New World Standards" for the five subject areas of the national goals.[3]

[3]The technical and conceptual problems in designing a system of regional examinations which are equated to a common set of national standards have not been resolved.

This analysis may have gone way beyond the intentions of *America 2000*. It suggests, however, that the issue of national testing goes well beyond testing itself. Is the new proposal a backdoor into a national curriculum or perhaps a set of "mini-national" curricula? What is meant by "New World Standards," who will determine them and under what process? And once these standards are determined, what are their implications for the type of examinations envisioned? These questions raise the issue of the nature of the tests. If the new standards are really to prepare students for the 21st century, they must emphasize a level of understanding and complex problem solving skills not evident in the past. To test these skills, many experts argue that we need tests different from the multiple choice tests that we presently use.

If the nation is to succeed in changing student performance, not only the nature of tests but the nature of instruction and learning must change. It is not enough to alter the test and the curriculum specifications. If the content of the new curricula is, indeed, far more challenging, new curriculum materials and well-prepared teachers will be required.

The *central implication* of a seriously different curriculum and challenging new standards—the need to reorient the system toward a new approach to teaching and learning—implies a *systemic approach* to reform. An examination system is needed that is tied to development of "world class" curricular frameworks and standards, professional development of teachers that focuses on new instructional content and strategies, curriculum materials, and a reorganization of schools to enhance the capacity of teachers.

Samuel H. Beer described a "national idea" as ". . . a theory of purpose. . . [that] invites us to ask ourselves what sort of a people we are and . . . what we wish to make of ourselves. . . ." The Bush/Alexander plan poses the kernel of a "national idea." Its growth will require considerable effort, resources and leadership, a strong dose of R&D and patience—indeed, a generational perspective. Institutions and habits take time to change.

ON TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY

Arthur E. Wise

"We cannot expect to see progress toward the national goals if a large percentage of teachers are not prepared to perform their jobs. If there are going to be common standards to measure children's performance, then there must be common national standards to measure teachers' competence."

Reaching America's education goals, so clearly outlined by President Bush in April, must be a national priority. All Americans embrace these aims for a literate and well-educated populace. The National Education Goals report describes one key factor necessary to reach these objectives—*teacher quality:* "the quality of teachers and teaching is essential to meeting our goals. We must have well-prepared teachers. . . . Policies that shape how our educators are prepared, certified, rewarded and supported on the job must be consistent with efforts to restructure the education system. . . ."

One element missing from *America 2000* is a commitment to develop the *well-prepared teachers* called for in the National Education Goals. An important lesson from the past is that we cannot improve the schools without improving the ability of the teachers in them. We must invest in the intellectual capital of those who staff our schools. Manipulating school organization and curriculum is insufficient. It is the teachers on the front lines who will make the difference. We cannot expect to see progress toward the national goals if a large percentage of teachers are not prepared to perform their jobs. If there are going to be common standards to measure children's performance, then there must be common national standards to measure teachers' competence.

The Issues Now

We will be adding one million new teachers into our schools by the year 2000. New teacher graduates now number 125,000 per year. A powerful way to affect student learning is to directly affect the preparation of one million new teachers.

The President's plan calls for grants to states and districts to develop alternate certification routes. Alternate forms of teacher education can be done well or poorly. Clear guidelines must be developed for the President's policy thrust in alternate certification so that a well-intentioned idea does not actually *reduce* the quality of our nation's teachers. I propose three specific steps to improve teacher quality; first, the background on why these steps are necessary.

Teachers Must Have a Knowledge Base in Teaching

Knowledge and competence in one's subject area is necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure competent teaching. Up to 55 languages are spoken in school systems in the Washington, D. C. area, which mirrors the environment in many other states. Teachers must be fully prepared to handle the complexities of over 25 clients at one time, many of whom will be leaving and reentering the class during the day for special instruction in English as a Second Language, individual training due to learning disabilities, and individual therapy. There is no substitute for knowledge of child and adolescent development, motivation, learning theory, individual differences, classroom management—all of which constitute pedagogical knowledge, as distinguished from subject matter knowledge. Teachers in today's classrooms must not only have taken pedagogical courses as part of a professional preparation program, but need to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge in a variety of situations. This calls for *extended* supervised practice periods. A synthesis of research by Linda Darling-Hammond describes in detail the studies that have been done which indicate that students taught by fully prepared teachers learn more than students taught by those who are unprepared for their jobs. In light of this knowledge, why are we still willing to place so many of our children in classrooms with unprepared personnel? Why are we especially willing to place disproportionate numbers of at-risk children in our cities into classrooms with unprepared teachers?

Lack of National Standards for Entry into the Teaching Profession

State standards for entry into the field vary widely and, in many cases, fluctuate with demand. Approaches to certification in various states require very minimal training. States currently approve teacher education programs. In the Southern states, notes David C. Smith (Dean of the College of Education at the University of Florida at Gainesville) no institution has been denied authority to prepare teachers in the past ten years. When a state judges a program inadequate, there is often political pressure to keep it operating. The National Association of State Boards of Education and the Education Commission of the States have both called for states to terminate inadequate programs; however, it is politically difficult for the states to regulate their own programs. Other professions have solved this problem by enabling independent, national accrediting bodies to accredit programs. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) serves such a function, but participation in it in most states is voluntary; these states impose no consequence if the institution is denied accreditation. Currently, only three of the 50 states require NCATE accreditation.

In other professions, states require professionals to graduate from accredited schools—nursing, accounting, architecture, medicine, mental health. Only then will the state issue a license to individuals to practice. When was the last time you went to a doctor who graduated from a non-accredited medical school? Would you take your child to one? Yet we entrust many of our children—our greatest natural resource—to those who are not prepared for their jobs as teachers.

'Alternate Certification'—What Kind of Alternative Is It?

States have implemented various alternate routes for certification (many of them are not actual programs). Estimates suggest that 30 to 40 states offer some form of alternative entry into teaching.

Alternate certification may involve flexible ways to meet current requirements, or it may mean lowering or eliminating these requirements. Certain alternate routes to certification are in direct conflict with the rigorous standards that NCATE has set for teachers and teacher educators. These routes by-pass current state standards, which in many cases are already minimal. Some alternate route plans are simply two-week summer programs. How-

ever, districts usually do not hire until September; new recruits would then have missed their only opportunity for pedagogical preparation prior to entry to the classroom. This type of approach allows for greatly reduced teacher preparation, in some cases providing education only after the person has begun teaching and before the individual has proved him or herself. Other approaches include flexible graduate programs that are designed to meet current standards, but which allow the student to complete the coursework in the evening rather than during the day. These programs maintain rigorous requirements for clinical preparation and coursework, while affording flexible scheduling.

We need *good alternative routes* for entry into teaching. In traditional routes to teaching, the coursework is embedded in the undergraduate curriculum. Alternate routes to teaching must be made available so that 35 year-old computer programmers who wish to change careers, 40 year-old mothers and 50 year-old engineers can enter teaching.

But, some alternate routes would actually lower the quality of our nation's teachers. One highly touted alternative certification plan, as actually practiced, is characterized by the following:

- During the first four weeks, alternative route teachers are supposed to be supervised 100 percent of the time. Actually, they were supervised a mere 15 percent of the time.
- Supervisors are supposed to have conferences with alternate route teachers before observing them. These conferences were held 25 percent of the time.
- Supervisors are supposed to critique the teaching of alternate route teachers after observing them. More than half the time they did not.
- Alternate route teachers are supposed to have the opportunity to observe other teachers. More than half the time they did not.[1]

Those who support alternate route certification may wish to allow anyone who wants to teach into the field, or may see teaching as an employment program for unemployed liberal arts graduates. Perhaps these decisionmakers mean to solve the teacher shortage problem by eliminating standards for entry to teaching.

Without the quality controls provided by good teacher education and meaningful teacher licensing, we will exacerbate the current problems of school management. If teachers cannot be trusted to be autonomous professionals, then more regulations will be imposed and more bureaucracy instituted. This is an ineffective policy response. College graduates need to acquire knowledge about effective teaching especially if they are to teach youngsters who are different from themselves. More and more teachers drawn from the middle class will be teaching at-risk, inner city children. In many cases, teachers will find that in their classrooms, minorities are a majority. Without adequate training in teaching's knowledge base, and without adequate and *extended* field and clinical experiences, these individuals' effectiveness will be very limited.

What Are The Better Alternatives?

How do we achieve the National Education Goals? **There is no shortcut to ensuring quality in our nation's classrooms.** I propose several new policy directions for teacher education which address the kind of teaching needed for the twenty-first century. *First, states and school districts must insist that every child, including at-risk children, be taught by a teacher who is prepared to teach effectively.* This seems like a simple doctrine to which everyone would subscribe. Yet it would have unprecedented policy implications. It would deny unprepared individuals the opportunity to learn how to teach at the expense of children. In this new system, you would have to learn how to teach *before* you are allowed to teach autonomously. Overwhelmingly, children at risk provide the training ground for unprepared personnel. Existing policies and certain alternate routes to certification would continue and expand this shameful practice.

Second, we must insist that our teachers graduate only from accredited schools of education. We cannot sanction plans that allow liberal arts graduates to enter classrooms with minimal or no training in teaching. Liberal arts graduates must complete graduate level preparation in teaching.

Established professions such as medicine, accounting and architecture have become so, in part, because each has united behind a national, profession-based system of accreditation. There is one national accrediting association for each of those fields. By and large, if a university does not have the approval of the relevant agency, it ceases to produce new members of the profession. That is what we must do in teaching if we are to achieve the quality that other professions now enjoy.

The President's goals call for accountability. Accountability requires greater, not less, professionalism. Professional accountability requires creating rigorous standards which those who practice in the field must demonstrate that they have met. Means of professional accountability within teaching include, on the individual level, licensing and certification, and on the program and institutional level, approval and accreditation. Many alternative certification efforts involve only a token amount of training, and would run counter to efforts already underway to strengthen accountability.

Recommendations

Policy makers, school system administrators, and education leaders need to work together to create a common national accreditation system. Speaking specifically to the President's goals, we need to work together to achieve the following:

- *We must ensure that routes to alternative certification are actually high quality programs, and not minimal efforts involving a few weeks of orientation.* The President's plan should encourage more schools of education to develop these kinds of programs. States could allocate grant monies planned for alternate certification programs to schools/departments of education within institutions that have teacher preparation programs. These funds could then be used to create or enhance graduate programs for alternate route candidates. The programs would conform to the high standards of national teacher education accreditation.
- *National, state and local policy makers should call for our nation's teachers to graduate from accredited teacher education institutions.* National accreditation by an independent body is a prerequisite for licensure in other professions. Why do we require less when it is a question of our nation's future—its children?
- *National accreditation should be accompanied by a state licensing system, which includes performance measures to determine a teacher's competence.* With high quality teaching for some children and low for others, America's schools will produce the same results they have in the past. By insisting on professional accountability for teacher educators and teachers, we can reinforce the quality of teaching in our nation's schools. With quality teaching for every student, America's schools will produce a literate and well-educated populace, and thus achieve the nation's aspirations.

[1] J. M. Smith, "School Districts as Teacher Training Institutions in the New Jersey Alternate Route Program." Paper presented at the Eastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference, February 15, 1990.

EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO HELP YOUTH

James E. Rosenbaum

"Can good schools educate hungry, frightened, unprepared and unsupported children while their families are being undermined by poverty and homelessness?

America 2000 poses bold goals for American education. What it lacks are sufficiently bold and effective strategies to achieve them. A sharper focus is needed to address its ambitious and worthy objectives.

School Choice Plans

School choice, a cornerstone of *America 2000*, is not a bad idea on its face, but its advantages are mostly theoretical and unproven. Advocates claim choice will encourage the creation of better new schools, but little data exist to prove the claim. It is also argued that choice will increase parent satisfaction, but parent satisfaction is not a good basis for judging educational quality. Gallup polls indicate that 90 percent of parents are already satisfied with their children's schools!

A larger problem is that the choice proposal does not address the primary problems noted in *America 2000:* American education's failure to meet minimum acceptable standards and its poor service to children from low-income families. In the Alum Rock, California voucher experiment, for example, few parents took advantage of school vouchers, and those few were mostly middle-class. The current Milwaukee school choice program is also very selective. Available evidence suggests that choice systems provide better schools to a few well-educated parents who have time to research their options and who know how to evaluate schools. There is no evidence that children of less educated parents will benefit.

The Alum Rock and Milwaukee initiatives suggest that parents believe government is responsible for assuring that all public schools meet adequate minimum standards, just as the government is responsible for assuring minimum standards for food and drugs. Most Alum Rock parents did not examine their school options largely because they assumed that the government had assured that all schools, including their neighborhood school, met adequate minimum standards. If the government fails to assure minimum standards in the schools, as *America 2000* admits, then the government is failing its responsibility.

Whether it is a good idea to give parents more choice in selecting the school their child shall attend (and that is debatable), *choice does not address the primary problem of education—schools' failure to meet minimum standards, especially for low-income children.* Choice offers no guarantee that all schools meet minimum acceptable standards. Until the government or a professional association assures parents that all schools meet minimum acceptable standards, choice will give parents only the illusion of improvement.

National Achievement Tests

America 2000 proposes national achievement tests as a means to ensure that all schools meet acceptable standards. But tests alone can do little to make weak schools stronger. Good tests are ten years away and, even then, we may not know how to use them. Experience suggests that when schools are blamed for poor test scores, principals often deny responsibility by blaming students' families for not supporting their children's education. Moreover, policy makers are frequently reluctant to punish inner-city schools for low test scores or to reward suburban schools for high scores. Scholars have proposed complex formulas for assessing achievement gains, but controversies rage about which factors should go into those formulas.

While college-bound students have incentives to improve their school achievement, work-bound students do not. Although jobs increasingly require academic skills, few employers use grades or test scores for hiring youth. The proposed new exams should be designed to test academic skills that employers need, and employers should be encouraged to consider these scores when hiring youth for better jobs.

Are Improved Schools Enough to Improve Learning?

America 2000 begins by enumerating the problems of youth. It ends by glossing over the solutions. It notes that "For too many of our children, the family that should be their protector, advocate and moral anchor is itself in a state of deterioration. . . For too many of our children, such a family never existed. . . *Too many of our children arrive at school hungry, unwashed and frightened* (p.6–7)."

Can good schools educate hungry, frightened, unprepared and unsupported children while their families are being undermined by poverty and homelessness? *America 2000* poses the right problems, and it is aware of their magnitude, but its proposals are only limited to schooling. Improved schools may help many children, but they are not likely to help the poorest 20 percent whose needs are much more than purely academic.

At a time when state and federal policies chip away at the subsistence of poor families, ambitious educational goals cannot help the children of those families. Even if students attend the best possible schools, they will not learn if they are hungry, homeless, and frightened about their family's economic welfare. If American students from low-income families are to become first in the world in science and mathematics, then this county must first improve the economic condition of America's families.

SEVEN LARGE QUESTIONS FOR *AMERICA 2000*'s AUTHORS

Harold Howe II

"The grand plan perpetuates the myth that we can fix the kids by fixing the schools. A document that doesn't even raise the questions of poverty and diversity lacks reality."

America 2000 makes two major omissions. First, it fails to recognize that American society is increasingly diverse, and has an immense problem making that social diversity work. The important role of the school in that task isn't even mentioned.

Second, it ignores perhaps the most important fact in the lives of American students: the alarming growth of poverty in their families. Poverty frustrates the capacity of families and communities to provide the material and emotional support children need for success in school. But the word "poverty" does not appear anywhere in the President's strategy.

These omissions bring to mind the "Road Song" of the monkeys in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*:

> Here we sit in a branchy row,
> Thinking of beautiful things we know;
> Dreaming of deeds that we mean to do,
> All complete in a minute or two—
> Something noble and grand and good,
> Won by merely wishing we could.

For reasons already mentioned, and for those that follow, I believe that *America 2000* is a flawed agenda for meeting the education needs of American children and youth. My observations fall under seven headings:

Using What We Know To Help Children Learn

America 2000 omits any significant action to spread more widely successful programs supported by the federal government. Head Start, Chapter 1, the Family Support Act of 1988, and the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 are three. This omission leaves the country in the doubtful posture of not making use of what it has learned from hard-won experience.

Many successful programs serve only a small portion of their eligible populations. In some cases, resources are not enough to reach even the most needy children and youth. Head Start, for example, now serves only about 25 percent of the children for whom it was designed, and there is immense demand for extending it. It is a school readiness program that produces very useful effects when well run—so much so that hard-headed business leaders now lobby extensively for its rapid growth.

All of us know the reason for this irrational posture—these programs cost money, and the Administration won't budget for what needs to be done. This view stems not from reason, but from a pernicious ideology. Recently, the Administration has given a signal that it sees the rationality of strengthening these efforts by increasing its budgets for both Head Start and Chapter 1, but not enough. In the meantime, the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources is moving more aggressively in the right direction. It is considering making Head Start an entitlement, while also providing needed support for major maternal-child health care initiatives as part of a national program for school readiness. Most of the other countries with which we compete have strong universal preschool programs. The first goal in the list of six National Education Goals states that "All children in America will start school ready to learn." We know how to reach for it; why not do it?

Helping Teachers To Be More Effective

American schooling must rethink its pedagogy and arrangements for helping teachers teach. This need is powerfully present in the best studies of what is going on in American schools (Goodlad, Sizer, Johnson, Boyer, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, the William T. Grant Foundation Commission, and others). *America 2000* makes a bow in this direction by suggesting "Governors' Academies" for teachers, and by calling for more flexibility in teacher certification. These are two sensible but inadequately executed ideas, with only seed money from the federal government to support them. The states and the cities of this country, however, are already broke as a result of having to shoulder fiscal responsibility for numerous social programs that until ten years ago were funded by the federal government. In addition, the refashioning of all existing teacher preparation programs is an immense task that Governors' Academies cannot handle alone; although they may provide some useful stimulation. Helping current teachers to master new classroom strategies that will both motivate children and make the learning process less passive for the learners is an equally daunting task. Where will teachers in the schools find the time to engage in the planning efforts, and the trial-and-error practice that must accompany this change? The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Holmes Group, among others, are struggling with these questions; but these activities aren't even mentioned in *America 2000*. A review of their work would help apprise the Administration of the complexities ignored by *America 2000*'s simple solutions. Yes, the encouragement of alternative certification systems will be useful, but without a massive effort in each state to prepare teachers differently and to rebuild their in-service development programs, new certification changes won't have much effect.

Failure to Focus on the Special Learning Needs of America's Diverse Social Groups

The difficulty in meeting the learning and personal fulfillment needs of our society's various cultures is simply unacknowledged. The document assumes that what students are to learn is confined to five subjects, with no mention of foreign language or the arts. How schooling can become multicultural is not an easy question to answer. But a national plan for education that doesn't even raise the question lacks reality.

Also absent is any recognition of the unfair distribution of educational services in the U.S.A. Today's poor and minority families are generally served by ill-supported schools, while white middle- and upper-class families attend public schools more adequate in every respect. Don't the authors of this document know that the state supreme courts of Texas and Kentucky declared that the varied conditions of schooling in their states were unconstitutional? Couldn't they have urged the President to put his weight behind the dozen or more law suits now moving to decision in other states? Don't they realize that this unfairness to blacks, Hispanics and other minorities in the schools is the polite leftover of racism in our society? Did they ever consider that school desegregation is still an issue in many cities where the changes they endorse must be introduced?

535 "New American Schools" (With More to Follow)

The history of model schools cautions against this effort. A few—like the Math/Science School in North Carolina—are quite impressive; but their impact on teaching and learning in the rest of the state is questionable. Also, unlike the 535 new schools, they tend to get much higher support per pupil than the average school. How will the new schools be disciplined to operate at average costs, as the proposal suggests? Will the New American Schools for poor and minority kids operate at the average cost of schools for such kids today, or the average cost for all kids? There's a big difference.

Nor does our experience with demonstrations under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act bode well for these new schools. The theory was that innovations developed in local school districts would attract the interest of other schools that would copy the new model with no special assistance. It didn't work. The main reaction of other schools was, "Give us some money, and we'll do it, too." This program should include substantial resources and a high level of teacher participation in planning.

Throughout *America 2000*, two opposing concepts remain unresolved. On the one hand, goals, standards and tests are to be developed outside the schools, and the nature of the New American Schools is to be planned by corporately-funded R&D teams. On the other hand, the document asserts several times the importance of leaving the significant decisions to the individual school's teachers, parents and principals. Teachers may well feel that the assertions about their leadership in educational change is only rhetoric.

Choice and National Testing

I link these two items together, because I believe that, more than other policy views in *America 2000*, they are likely to generate a national debate. Otherwise, they aren't particularly related to each other. Both are vaguely described in *America 2000*. We won't know what is really intended until legislation spells out the critical details.

What we know from experience, however, is that choice is the more elusive of the two. The Administration presents it for ideological reasons, rather than for any analytical results that are available from experience with it. In a similarly ideological sense, I am strongly opposed to choice as the main instrument to produce quality in schools. I believe that most teachers can be motivated to serve children well because they are committed to children's well-being. But shifting the basis of that commitment to the competitive motives that operate between Pepsi Cola and Coca Cola will diminish teachers' reach for standing as a profession.

As for national testing, it is not clear to me what is planned or wanted. Certainly we need new and better tests that do more to help teachers and students in the learning process than do current standardized tests. But such tests are much more useful in the classroom than they are for purposes of establishing comparisons. If what is intended is making new and better tests available nationwide to those in schools who want to use them, I say "Amen." But if the plan is to spring the new tests on kids as a way of forcing teachers to adapt to standards, I'm dead against it. As I have said in another context, it's like teaching kids to swim by throwing them into deep water. Some will drown. New and better tests belong in classrooms where teachers and students have had the opportunity to prepare for them.

Families and Communities

I was delighted to find a major section of *America 2000* devoted to the role of families and communities in the educational process. But my enthusiasm waned as I read on. Perhaps the most powerful signal about its inadequacy on these subjects is that the issue of poverty is never mentioned.

Here are our educational and political leaders saying to communities and families: "Government can't do anything for you; you must pull yourselves up by your own bootstraps." That's baloney! If the sensible Family Support Act of 1988 were pushed by the President and strongly supported by governors, the children in poor families in this country would have a better chance for school success. The 38 million people without health insurance, including numerous children, have their prospects for school success dimmed by that lack.

The litany of ills (hunger, violence, drugs, etc.) listed on pages 6 and 7 of *America 2000* are in large part the products of poverty, and poverty is at least partly remediable. Other countries deal with it more generously than we do. Could the authors of this paper be blind to the fact that poverty has been an American growth stock among children, youth, and young families for twenty years? And what kind of wishful thinking does it take to suggest that local initiatives alone can deal with such a problem? Of course, local efforts are needed; and the thoughts about community and family responsibility in this plan make good sense. But they are only part of the story. As the rich grow richer and the poor poorer and more numerous, and as we continue to put a larger proportion of our poor and minorities in prison than any other free country in the world, can the bootstrap posture advocated in this document really be defended?

"New World Standards" in Five Subjects

Until we see examples of these standards, no reasonable judgement can be made about how well they will serve the interests of our increasingly diverse population. But questions should be raised early about why foreign languages and the arts are omitted. Even those who see schooling as a narrow, utilitarian activity should speak up for better foreign language preparation. When one considers the place of music, art, drama, dance and poetry in the lives and cultures of peoples throughout history, no less than in modern political states and the training of their leaders, it seems inexcusable to ignore them.

In addition, the processes and the people by which these standards are defined needs more definition than the paper provides. It merely says they will be developed "in conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel." Who is that? How did they get appointed? Will teachers be part of the development process? Will minority groups be included? What safeguards will prevent standards from reflecting a particular ideology or political viewpoint in such fields as literature and history? These are serious questions that need answers before the standard-setting process goes forward.

I am left with the feeling that *America 2000* will help most those who go to college, and help least the Forgotten Half of our population who do not—particularly those from poor families. The plan is long on rhetoric and short on helping those with greatest need. But it is really right when it says, "Schools are not and cannot be parents, police, hospitals, welfare agencies, or drug treatment centers." Where it strikes out is in its failure to recognize that success in schools is powerfully related to these other entities. In other words, the grand plan perpetuates the myth that we can fix the kids by fixing the schools, no matter how much we damage them elsewhere. We must consider the effects on children of their lives outside of school—which, this document recognizes, occupy 91 percent of their time; and we must do it through both national and local initiatives.

WIDENING, NOT NARROWING, THE GAP

Jose A. Cardenas

"The America 2000 *initiatives fall far short of a comprehensive plan to address current educational problems. They fail to address the most severe problems of the educational system: the perception of atypical students as being deficient, the inability to distinguish between lack of experiences and lack of capability, low levels of expectancy and incompatible materials and methodology."*

It is satisfying to see the President of the United States finally establish an agenda which addresses education—one of the most pressing problems on the domestic scene. It is high time. But it is doubtful that the nine features of *America 2000*—even with their seeds of promise—will alleviate, let alone resolve, the multitude of problems facing educational institutions.

As has been characteristic of prior educational reform efforts, some of these features may make a small impact on the problem, many will be dysfunctional, and some may be counterproductive, creating more problems than solutions.

Education Sequence

Education can be organized into three sequenced phases: inputs, processes and outcomes. *America 2000* emphasizes outcomes, with little attention given to inputs and a complete neglect of processes. In doing so, it mirrors the attitude of the National Education Goals Panel, which targeted outcomes based on the erroneous assumptions that education needs to establish new goals and that once established, education is capable of achieving them.

Three major initiatives focus on educational outcomes: the establishment of new standards, nationwide tests, and the use of report cards to compare schools, districts and states.

The creation of new standards has been a common element in state school reform efforts. In general, the new standards provide a desirable goal for the schools to pursue, but past experience has shown that setting higher standards without assisting the students who could not meet the old standards to achieve at higher levels tends to be counterproductive.

The commonly used example may seem trite, but it still serves to illustrate the problem: If a runner cannot jump a hurdle three feet high, raising the bar to four feet without providing any additional training or instruction can only lead to increased frustration and failure. New standards must be accompanied by new strategies so that the extensive number of students who have failed under the old standards can succeed.

Developing new indicators of the massive failure of large segments of the school population is unnecessary. It is doubtful that minority, disadvantaged, limited English proficient, immigrant and migrant students will do any better or any worse on a new national exam than they are doing on the standardized national and state examinations currently in use.

Comparisons of schools, districts and states will demonstrate what is already known: that some segments of the population perform deplorably in the education process. School, district and state characteristics will be reflected in these comparisons.

Schools with large numbers and concentrations of minority, disadvantaged, and other atypical populations will do worse than schools enrolling white, middle class, English-language background students. Central city and rural districts will perform more poorly than suburban districts. States with homogeneous white populations will out-perform states with heterogeneous populations. The challenge is to provide assistance to students not performing well, not to further stigmatize them.

Choice

Without a doubt, the weakest part of *America 2000* is its expectation that choice will solve our most pressing educational problems. Choice is based on the assumption that a free marketplace will lead to the selection and utilization of those schools which are successful and the atrophy of those which are not. While this notion may be attractive, its lack of adequate conceptualization and refinement forebodes catastrophe.

The knee-jerk support which this methodology has received in the absence of performance information is amazing. The models which are widely utilized in support of choice are mostly untested, what little evaluation has been done relies on deplorable research methods.

The most compelling argument against "choice" as the panacea for educational improvement is the *lack* of choice available to those segments of the school population most in need of an alternative. Existing models assume that all students have the wherewithal to make their choice a reality. Many poor families may have difficulty in allocating funds to make up the difference between government subsidies and the cost of private education. Not every student has access to the necessary transportation, or a parent with the time to help them make an informed "choice." This absence of choice for the school segment most in need of educational opportunity will lead to the mass exodus of only the white middle class from the central city schools, resulting in the dual system so common in other countries: The upper and middle classes attend private schools, and the public schools resemble charity institutions for those who have nowhere else to go.

In order for a choice program to be effective, *all* families must have equal opportunity to choose. This demands a guarantee of adequate transportation to the school of choice, with support transportation to ensure student participation in extra curricular activities, transportation for emergency situations, and transportation for parents to be meaningfully involved with the school.

The mind-boggling logistics of desegregation seem insignificant compared to the logistics of implementing a democratic choice program. At the present time, successful schools are not so plentiful that all students could be guaranteed placement. Balanced distributions of minority, disadvantaged, limited English proficient children and other atypical populations will require advanced planning and careful implementation.

Advocates of choice shrug off these caveats with the simplistic assurance that all of

these concerns will be addressed eventually. None of the existing models have addressed them, as yet, however. Nor is there any readily available model to respond to these concerns in future programs.

Innovative Schools

Perhaps the strongest element of *America 2000* is the provision for 535+ new, experimental schools. The concept of creating innovative new schools, with creative teachers and administrators, unfiltered by the traditions and tractiveness of existing institutions, is indeed challenging.

Reviews of educational literature show an extensive array of successful school programs in every sector of the country and for every segment of the population. During the past decade we have been thrilled by reports of school success among students deemed uneducable in the traditional school. The Committee for Economic Development's *Strategies for the Education of the Disadvantaged*, Lizbeth Schorr's *Within Our Reach*, and very recently the Quality Education for Minorities Project's report, *Education That Works*, are three recent efforts documenting the success of pilot, model and innovative programs. The innovative schools project proposed by the federal administration should be at least as successful.

We should note, however, the observation of former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall, who chaired the Quality Education for Minorities effort: though QEM found an abundance of successful *projects* in its nationwide survey, it did not identify one single successful educational *system*.

The three elements found in all of these successful projects provide important clues in addressing educational reform. In all of the successful projects, (1) children were valued in ways not commonly found in regular and traditional schools; (2) students were provided support services not commonly provided in regular and traditional schools; and (3) there were unique relationships among the school, the community and the family not commonly found in regular and traditional schools.

The proposed innovative schools will probably be extremely successful with the students they serve. The problem will lie in transferring the success of the innovative school to the traditional school campus. As noted by Marshall, no school system operating a successful project was successful in transferring this success to the regular school program. Neither the valuing of students, nor the supportive structures, nor the unique school/community/home relationships characteristic of successful programs will automatically transfer to non-participating schools. A federally-sponsored innovative school with the most dedicated, innovative, creative, sympathetic and best-trained teaching and administrative staff may have little impact on the thousands of schools in each of the 535 congressional districts not participating in the project.

America 2000 fails to address the common barriers to schooling. It inadequately values students and does not reflect the priority, attention and resources allocated to other national issues.

The initiatives fail to address the need for sufficient investment in the education of children, let alone the innovative and equitable distribution of limited existing resources. Providing incentives for better performance by rewarding exemplary schools violates a basic principle of school finance. Performance is a poor basis for the distribution of resources. Rewarding high performing schools may deny resources to the entities which most need them. Providing funds for under-achieving schools may reward inefficiency and incompetence.

The *America 2000* initiatives fall far short of a comprehensive plan to address current educational problems. They fail to address the most severe problems of the educational system: the perception of atypical students as being deficient, the inability to distinguish between lack of experiences and lack of capability, low levels of expectancy and incompatible materials and methodology. Direction, support and resources are needed to address these inadequacies in existing schools.

WHERE'S THE CARROT? WHERE'S THE STICK?

Siobhan O. Nicolau

"Choice will fail the poor, and therefore will fail the nation, unless we target the at-risk as a priority group early in the process, and come to grips with how we will evaluate performance and set standards for schools that serve vastly different populations."

Although "The Overview" and "The Challenge" of the President's *America 2000* are an eloquent call to arms, and although its goals are unarguably laudable, the document sidesteps the hard questions.

The weakness becomes clear in the pull quotes alone. Those seven phrases chosen for special emphasis are revealing, both in what they say and in what they leave unsaid. Five quotes are worth reviewing here:

Quote 1. "We already know the direction in which we must go; the *America 2000* strategy will help us get there."

Quote 2. "As a nation, we now invest more in education than in defense."

Quote 5. "R&D Teams . . . can be expected to set aside all traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints that conventional schools work under."

America 2000 neglects to identify the overarching principles of successful education. These quotes assert that we know where we are going and that the nation has invested heavily in education. Since *A Nation at Risk* was released in 1983, the finest academicians and practitioners in the country have put their minds and experiences to the task of analyzing our education systems from every conceivable viewpoint. Serious and significant demonstrations have been mounted to test innovative approaches designed to raise the level of student achievement and attainment. Much has been learned. For example, there is consensus that an education system must be flexible in order to respond to the changing needs and realities of students. Concomitantly, strong consensus has emerged around a number of overarching principles that support learning for all children and adults. But Quote 5 implies that we are going to throw out all assumptions and start anew. Even more alarming, it says that all traditional assumptions will be set aside.

Had the authors listed the principles of successful education that have been validated by the work of the last decade, they might have recognized that a range of "traditional assumptions"—the value of a caring but disciplined and orderly environment; high expectations on the part of teachers; strong parental involvement; manageable school size; reasonable ratios between children and adults; school readiness on the part of children; community respect for teachers and teaching; connecting education to the world of work; sensitivity to the culture, life styles, and realities of children and their families—have been repeatedly identified as the basic building blocks of successful and diverse demonstration programs. Why invest vast sums of money only to set them aside?

To be fair, Quote 5 argues that the *constraints* under which most conventional schools now work must be set aside. But, as in the case of lessons learned, the reader is not told what these constraints are. This is perhaps the report's fatal flaw. We are to join a crusade and march off to do battle against anonymous constraints. And further, by mounting 535+ *"traditional assumption-free* and *conventional constraint-free schools,"* we will—by some undefined magic of good example—defeat the forces that sustain and support those constraints. The magic had better be powerful, because formidable forces, encased in the armor of entrenched bureaucracy, defend the status quo of the existing 110,000 public and private schools. These forces stand ready to protect their turf; 535+ new schools responding to a *greater good* will not compel them to abandon their defenses. Each and every power bloc will have to be wooed to the side of reform, and incentives must be tailored to respond to their fears, needs, and concerns. When push comes to shove, enthusiasm for the greater good is directly related to how closely that good can be tied to vested interests. There must be carrots.

But if carrots are needed, so are sticks. Whether the strong role designated for business is meant to be a stick is not clear. Business clearly has a vested interest in supporting the development of educated consumers and prepared workers, and, for the most part, recognizes that fact. Educated consumers and prepared workers are the backbone of booming business. The business community has been a crucial resource in education reform, because experienced critical thinkers and practiced marketeers fill its ranks. When businesses come together as a group to confront social problems, the group hammers out solid, rational solutions which it strongly supports and widely disseminates. And business wields clout. However, two factors influence how, where and to what extent business can be effective in the education crusade.

The first is that business seems woefully ignorant of how policy in the public sector gets translated into action. Business tends to think in terms of how policy in a corporation gets enacted, and when public policy grinds to a halt, or moves at a glacial pace, business leaps to the conclusion that the problem is management.

In the private sector, policy makers exert significant control, and the bottom line instills discipline. Policy plans are mandated down through the management ranks to the policy consumers in a relatively linear manner. Public policy reform doesn't work that way. Not only must the policy pass through complicated webs and levels of interested parties, each of whom has particular motivations and responsibilities, but in addition the potential consumers of the policy are often in competition with the reformers—*they themselves are out there actively devising policy or sustaining policy*. No central locus of control exists. The process is inherently messy and frustrating. While no one has devised a way to handle it well, business suffers the mess and frustration with poor grace.

The second business caution relates to how businesses behave when they are not functioning in the context of "a peer group analyzing common or national problems." Individual businesses are no less schizophrenic than individual bureaucracies or individual people. Business is accustomed to looking after its own best interest. That is how it

survives in a competitive game. As a consequence, an individual business is perfectly capable of sincerely embracing and supporting a "group policy" dedicated to upgrading workers' skills and educating the new workforce for the new labor market, while simultaneously it considers the cost of installing automation systems that would eliminate jobs, or explores the possibility of importing qualified workers from abroad. It is not realistic to expect business to ignore the bottom line. The JTPA experience indicates that business can do wonderful things with those pieces of the social-action equation that support business in the short term. They are less effective when the subject shifts to the at-risk and to long-term payoffs. That is not so much a criticism as a fact that must be recognized. Business, by nature, is not "at-risk" oriented.

Quote 4. "If standards, tests and report cards . . . tell parents and voters how their schools are doing, choice gives them the leverage to act."

But business is not the only sector that avoids confronting the "at-risk." Quote 4 above slides by the question as well. Choice has meaning only when the choosers comprehend the choices they are making, and no experience to date indicates that at-risk families—especially poor and immigrant families—understand the basic education issues, or that schools have helped them understand. In fact, while supporting the concept of standards, the report does not explain the process by which we are expected to judge "how a school is doing." "Doing well" in relation to what? Controversy rages around that issue; can poor parents recognize what is best for their children when education experts have yet to reach consensus on what works for at-risk youth?

Choice will fail the poor, and therefore will fail the nation, unless we target the at-risk as a priority group early in the process, and come to grips with how we will evaluate performance and set standards for schools that serve vastly different populations. And how does that concept square with *national standards?* How do we get more at-risk children into preschool and their families into parent training? *America 2000* glides over the preschool years that are crucial for poor parents and children.

Quote 6. "Education is not just about making a living; it is also about making a life."

Quote 6 sounds more profound than it is. Many poor youngsters drop out of school, not because they are alienated or hopelessly failing, but because they have to go to work to survive. And they work in dead-end jobs. The working poor have no time to learn, in or out of school, and few programs offer them the option of learning and earning. For dropouts and the under-educated, many of whom are holding down two jobs, the concept of life-long learning is as goofy an idea as camping on the moon. The report avoids addressing the needs of those with marginal holds on the job market—blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans—who represent a growing segment of society. And the report skirts the subject of trade and service skills. Through silence, it robs the trade and service skills of the respect they deserve as platforms for well-paid employment and doors to entrepreneurial opportunity.

America 2000 hides from much that is central to understanding how reform can and must work. *Unacknowledged problems resist solution.* Until the full education picture, in all its complexity and with all its inherent political controversy, is put on view, the four big trains will not leave the station. Courage must be found to look hard questions square in the eye. The education crusade is one we must win. But it will wither away, destroyed by vested interest and passive resistance, if it is not rooted in reality and undergirded with the carrots that will make people want to act, and the sticks that will keep them moving.

IGNORING SOCIAL DYNAMITE PRIMED TO EXPLODE

Bernard C. Watson

"No distinction is made between schools in grave need and those that are relatively well-off, between students who are disadvantaged and those who are not, between those who are fluent in their native language or in two languages and those who have failed to master any language."

President Bush has called upon Americans to support the implementation of six National Education Goals. All Americans should support those goals.

As the National Governors' Association has recognized, assessment is central to knowing whether we are making progress as a nation and whether students are achieving the academic gains the nation expects of them. Having said that, however, it is equally important to note that testing should come not only while schools are in the *process* of reformation but *after* they have been reformed. This nation already has a pretty good idea of which schools and school systems are doing well and which schools and school systems are not. State assessments, nationally-normed tests, PSATs, SATs, ACTs and numerous other local tests are already being administered. Leaving aside for the moment the questions of validity, predictability, fairness and comprehensiveness which have been raised in the course of the history of the testing movement in this country, the development of new and better modes of assessment should characterize educational reform.

Most Americans want higher standards for schools and higher standards for students, but it is naive or cynical to suggest that students be held to world class standards in core subjects without focusing on how students will be able to bring their performance up to those standards. We need to develop, in tandem with the standards, initiatives to help students improve their performance. Without such renewed attention, efforts to revitalize our educational system run the risk of becoming obstacles in the path of underachieving students.

If President Bush wants his education strategy to be taken seriously, he should begin by taking it seriously himself. He should immediately *abandon the charade that remarkable public education—with or without choice—can be achieved without additional resources.* It may very well be true that existing resources can be used in more efficient ways and that scarce resources should be assigned to priority areas. But additional resources are essential to any effort to create improvement and maintain quality for *all* of this country's children and youth, not just those who already have distinct advantages. The President would never suggest that the Pentagon could develop new weapons without additional resources, and it would be a good idea if he stopped implying that schools can or ought to do that which the Pentagon is not required to do.

The President's call for educational improvement and reform is important, but it displays no sense of urgency, no sense that improved education is crucial to both individuals and the nation. No distinction is made between schools in grave need and those that are relatively well-off, between students who are disadvantaged and those who are not, between those who are fluent in their native language or in two languages and those who have failed to master any language. A number of major issues are ignored: education for diversity; extended school day or year; provision of school-based health care; apprenticeships and/or other school/industry collaborative programs. Addressing these needs and concerns requires resources not now available, and the levels of funding allocated or "to be sought" appear to be unrealistic.

What disturbs me most about the President's strategy is that it shows little or no acquaintance with the history—and the difficulties—of educational reform. Thirty years ago, the National Committee on Children and Youth convened a Conference on Unemployed Out-of-School Youth in Urban Areas. Among the persons in attendance at that conference were Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson, U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, U.S. Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, and Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Abraham Ribicoff. President Emeritus of Harvard University, Dr. James Bryant Conant, served as General Chairman of the Conference and gave the keynote address. In that address, Conant said:

> . . . I am convinced that the problem you are here to discuss poses a serious threat to our free society. I submit that the existence in the slums of our large cities of thousands of youth . . . who are both out of school and out of work is an explosive situation.

It was explosive, Conant said,

> . . . because of the total size of the group . . . the density of the population, the number of frustrated youth per block; and the isolation of the inhabitants from other kinds of people and other sorts of streets and houses. . . . The building up of a mass of unemployed and frustrated Negro youth in congested areas of a city is a social phenomenon that may be compared to the piling of inflammable material in an empty building in a city block.

Conant then outlined what he considered to be the underlying causes and implications of the situation he described as "SOCIAL DYNAMITE" the title of the proceedings of that Conference.

The Conference continued for several days and involved some of the leading educators, youth workers and social workers, religious leaders, labor leaders and heads of national organizations concerned with youth. After three days of intensive working sessions, several points of emphasis emerged, almost by consensus:

- This is the Number One domestic problem and can be solved only with multiple resources; there are no easy solutions.
- Schools in low income areas must be greatly strengthened.
- Employment services must be greatly expanded and improved with specialized services for hard-to-place young people.
- Resources of the community must be mobilized through some kind of formal machinery with broad representation.
- Participation of labor and management is imperative; discrimination must be eliminated through fair employment practices legislation, vigorous enforcement of equal job practices by both labor

and management, and voluntary action by all segments of the community.
- Research to provide facts, define the problem, and plan action is needed, and national attention must be directed to the problem.

But these were not neophytes attending the Conference, nor were they utopians looking to the government to solve all of the problems. The Conference participants agreed that "government financial aid, programs and leadership are needed in the present emergency to provide productive, non-competitive work for unemployed youth." But Conant also said:

> . . . .If you can, in the private sector, get the money and build the jobs, and arrange for eliminating discrimination, fine, go to it. This has to be explored community by community.
>
> Nobody expects all of the unemployed school dropouts in the big city slums to be put to work tomorrow, but if some program . . . could put half of them to work within a year, you would have made a real dent on what to me is a desperately dangerous situation. . . .

Dr. Ewan Clague, U.S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics, estimated that of the 10.5 million young Americans who were between 16 and 21 in October 1960, nearly seven million boys and girls were in school. There were also 450,000 who were out of school, looking for jobs and unable to find them. In the big cities of this country, the Conference reported unemployment percentages of 55–70 percent among poor and minority youth.

If this litany sound familiar, it is because much of what *America 2000* is ignoring today is what we ignored years ago: the most disadvantaged among our students and schools.

We already know a lot; there are schools and programs that work, even under the most difficult circumstances. Some of our young people do very well indeed; others need special assistance. Among the recommendations which grow out of our experience with previous reform efforts would be:

- Provide full funding for Head Start, a proven model program.
- Target the neediest schools: ask them what is needed and what could be done "if."
- Set minimum standards for all schools.
- Allocate major immediate funding to bring schools up to those minimums; work with governors to develop new methods of school financing across the nation.
- Use the power and prestige of the presidency to *demand*, not simply encourage, compliance at every stage.

We *can* have a world class educational system, and we *can* elicit world class performance from our students. But we can't have either if we choose rhetoric over action, simple-minded palliatives rather than well-thought-out remedies, tinkering at the margins rather than structural and substantive reform. The choice is really ours: we pay now, or we pay later.

EDUCATING THE NEW AMERICAN STUDENT

Anne C. Lewis

"We must admit that the rhetoric of national leadership . . . sabotages the future of . . . all young people. It denies the fact that we are more diverse in population and culture than ever before. It ignores the strengths of that diversity and the vitality it has provided our society in the past."

Z. is a shy, skinny kid whose enormous brown eyes watch goings-on in her north Milwaukee neighborhood far beyond the comprehension of most Americans. Like any seventh grader, she would like to get together with friends after school and play outside, but she can't. "There have been too many killings around my home," she told me. But Z. watches TV, and last summer she saw an ad about a special program for youngsters her age at a local campus. She enrolled herself and took a city bus everyday to attend classes in basic skills.

Still, last Fall she entered school two years behind in reading and math, but in a special Chapter 1 program, with an excellent teacher, a small class and computerized instruction, Z. took off. When school ended this year, she was at the ninth-grade level in both subjects. Most of the students at her all-minority, poverty-ridden middle school are eligible for such special services, but there aren't enough resources to go around.

Z. will need a lot of help to become an architect—her ambition. Less than ten percent of the students attending her neighborhood high school go on to college. With a single mother and two siblings, the road ahead will be tough, even for a youngster with grit and goals.

Unfortunately, policy makers, both in the White House and on Capitol Hill, are not making it any easier for Z. Her determination makes Z. stand out, but very few of her classmates—or those her age anywhere—actually want to fail. A lot don't care about succeeding in a school system that fails and/or bores them, but they do want to become competent, decent, contributing adults.

As lofty as *America 2000* claims to be and as true to traditional support for the disadvantaged as current proposals in Congress promise, both strategies are inadequate, piecemeal solutions to the barriers confronting our youth. Neither conservative nor liberal, Democrat nor Republican, cutters nor spenders have proposed or supported ideas that really address the two major reasons causing our public education system to falter.

The first is *how we finance the education* of children and youth. One of the governors most prominent in the effort on national goals has commented that it is absurd to promote education as our greatest priority, then to continue to finance it on the least substantive and most volatile tax base we have—property taxes. The problem is more than one of basic inequities. It is one of allowing the financing of schools to be vulnerable to extreme local and regional economic swings—and swings in public moods—that produce constant instability (at the end of the school year, the Milwaukee school board faced a $47 million shortfall. The teachers in Z.'s school were not sure who or what programs would be back in September.) Even the most affluent school districts are not immune from efforts to spread too few resources around. It should embarrass a society proud of its leadership and convinced that it is child-centered that the United States turns to lotteries or state takeovers to keep our schools running.

It also must seem curious to the business communities in our competing economies that it is the business sector that is being called upon to fund "research" on K–12 education. According to Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, the business community is being asked to fund a nonprofit organization to award research contracts for the New American Schools because "it was looking for something useful to do."

But should business expertise be squandered on a questionable research project? Wouldn't it be much more "useful" for business to fund research—if that is what it wants to do—on workplace training and adult literacy? Or, if it wants to do something "new," doesn't it make more sense for the business community to help develop a school-to-work transition system? This effort would be a more immediate and direct benefit to at least one-half of our young people than would an esoteric, "iffy" project to create model schools. Supporters of the proposal may answer that transition programs could be a part of the New American School. But resources are going to be limited for any initiative; better to have a focus than spread money too thinly.

True, asking business to put its clout behind entrance to the job market might expose the issue of job creation and economic development. And support for either adult literacy or transition programs might require the business community to make greater investments in people. Still America's economic competitors in such places as Germany and Japan seem willing enough to do this.

The point is that we flail around with ideas to plug the holes, never addressing the fact that the whole financing structure needs to be examined, particularly in light of our commitment to national goals. We need an honest national discussion of education financing. It should be non-partisan and take place at all levels, resulting in recommendations on possible alternatives that would be unarguably accountable and fair.

Of course, this is not a politically smart suggestion. There is the danger that such a discussion would be drowned out by shouting matches between the budget cutters and the categorical expanders. A legitimate discussion would challenge the governance structure as well. But the Administration's plan to make an end run around school bureaucracies through independently-financed model schools and choice programs is not radical, as the rhetoric suggests. It would only perpetuate an outmoded system, moving pieces around on a worn-out, tattered checkerboard, and would never produce a winning strategy. If we are serious about a national commitment to children and their education, then our leadership also needs to be courageous.

The other reason policy making fails students like Z. is because it is based on *a vision of classrooms that do not exist anymore*. *America 2000* and many of the current proposals in Congress are so far removed from the reality of who is teaching and who is being taught as to be virtually irrelevant. Their

harm lies in pretending that we can tack higher standards onto the current system and test for them, provide some kind of lighthouse (or hothouse?) examples of innovation, and categorically deal with multiple problems—without admitting and adjusting to the fundamental and profound changes in the student population and in their communities. Current recommendations expertly dodge the reality that teachers do not know how to deal with the diversity in their classrooms.

That diversity is more than one of color or language. Increasingly, it reflects poverty. Further, most students are "educated" to an adult world earlier and more thoroughly than ever before by television and other media, during that 91 percent of the time spent out of school so often referred to by President Bush. At the same time, young people are more isolated and dependent upon peers for support and direction in forming values.

There is research evidence and experience aplenty about how to successfully engage these "new" students in learning. The problem is not one of not knowing; it is, as many have observed, rather a lack of will. Evidence faults an unresponsive system; it does not warrant punishing the victims of such a system.

Individual teachers and principals throughout the country, and some lucky enough to belong to networks of like-minded educators, are adjusting their strategies and raising their expectations to meet the needs of a different generation of students. But there are too few of them. Most work in isolation and against an environment defined by an aging teaching force—one that is preoccupied with maintaining control over students and a way of teaching that is slipping away from them.

How can solutions to this micro-attitude problem be translated into national policy? *By making diversity important and a positive force in our society.* To be brutally honest, we must admit that the rhetoric of national leadership—as displayed, for example, by many in the recent debate over civil rights legislation—sabotages the future of students like Z.—and all young people. It denies the fact that we are more diverse in population and culture than ever before. It ignores the strengths of that diversity and the vitality it has provided our society in the past. It assumes family and community structures can self-correct.

America 2000 celebrates assessments but never mentions equity or diversity. It presumes that "a" community around "a" school can define the ultimate for all—the discredited notion of "one best system for all." Congress, meanwhile, ignores the leverage it could provide.

Such leadership—or lack of it—lets educators reluctant to change their own attitudes and professional habits off the hook. As long as the challenge is only "better tests" and "better test scores," "yesterday's" teachers will make peripheral adjustments. The Administration believes that if teachers fail to produce improvements, students can find others who will teach them better in schools of choice. But where is the magician who will produce such teachers out of a hat? Where is the understanding that success with today's young people comes about only when teachers are willing and able to make difficult professional adjustments that take time, support and a belief that what they are doing is important?

The way for national leadership to say that new attitudes and pedagogy are important would be to focus directly on the mismatch between teachers and students. How much more useful it would be to put research dollars into helping educators adapt to the diversity in their classrooms. Or into helping workplace managers adjust to sharing decision-making with those culturally different from them. Why couldn't this issue of diversity receive as much funding as math and science? Why couldn't Congress demonstrate the collaborative strategies it professes and develop legislation *across* its own committee structures—to bring together education, health, social services and labor interests into cohesive child and youth policy initiatives? Congress wants other levels of governance to do this. Why should it be exempted?

In almost all cases where good things are happening for today's students, teachers are being helped by "seed" money from foundations, or businesses, or special programs. Why can't Congress and the White House scatter seeds nationwide—to universities willing to establish research and practice centers within schools, giving teachers direct access to the knowledge base that already exists on how to teach the new students? Or to school districts—facing massive costs in the repair and rehabilitation of school buildings—which would use the funds to change schools into family and community service centers? We *know* these work.

None of these ideas about how to redirect attention to helping teachers be successful with their "new" students are the stuff of usual politics. Z. probably does not understand such politics but she does know that in her school only a handful of teachers are exploring cooperative learning or similar successful strategies, even though one-half have been teaching more than 15 years. Multicultural resources are at a minimum. Her school is mostly poor and totally minority; the students score among the lowest in the city. Yet, the connection between the failure of the students and the failure to change teaching and expectations has not been made.

Z.'s world is extreme but different only in degree from classrooms all over the country where teachers' skills and attitudes do not match with students' needs. The answer is not to excoriate either teachers or students. Nor to stuff them into old molds, euphemistically termed "New American Schools." Nor to insist that change can come about without sizable investments in time and personal renewal. Rather, national leadership should assure that public education resources will be stable and adequate for a system that wants to be among the best. And it must show commitment to a vision of a nation—and a public school system—made much better because they have learned to nurture, inspire and respect the "new" generations.

SCENES FROM THE NEW AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Joan Lipsitz

"Were it enough for teachers and students to be at-the-ready every day, armed against ignorance solely with the weapons of English, history, science, mathematics and geography, the President's proposed nine-year crusade would have a hopeful future."

Setting The Scene[1]

It is Memorial Day weekend, 1991, a holiday that commemorates this country's insistence upon resisting a nation-threatening divisiveness.

I am reading on a beautiful deck overlooking the nation's cleanest continental waterway, the St. Croix River. A large umbrella protects me from a gentle rain. The cottage's color scheme is blue and yellow, Scandinavian to the core. A sound system, tuned to NPR, has treated me all morning to Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart and Haydn. The size of last night's dinner—steaks from a quaint Stillwater butcher shop, salad greens from the garden—kept me from eating until 10:00 this morning.

It is a setting in sharp contrast to the world presented in the pages before me: Alex Kotlowitz's *There Are No Children Here*, a graphic description of the lives of two young boys growing up in one of Chicago's housing projects. Kotlowitz brings to life—so vividly that one is loath to turn each page for fear of losing these boys to violence and despair—the statistics that have begun to numb us.

We are awash with data that drive home a simple truth: Increasing numbers and percentages of children are hobbled by poverty:

- Approximately 20 percent of America's children live in poverty and the figure is rising.
- Children are poorer than any other age group, and they are worse off than they were two decades ago.
- African-American and Hispanic children are two to three times more likely to be living in poverty than are white children.
- The median family income of white children is twice that of African-American children and more than 1 3/4 times that of Hispanic children.
- Family incomes of African-American and Hispanic children continue to decline.

What social policy can resist the threat of this New American Civil War, fought covertly on the shores of the St. Croix and the cement playgrounds of public housing developments?

The Battleground

If *America 2000: An Education Strategy* is to lead to feasible, efficient, effective and non-stigmatizing policy, its next iteration will have to come closer to resolving the following antagonisms in the New American Civil War:

The School As Five Core Subjects vs. the School As Human Services Center

Were it enough for teachers and students to be at-the-ready every day, armed against ignorance solely with the weapons of English, history, science, mathematics and geography, the President's proposed nine-year crusade would have a hopeful future.

But, in its 1987 report, *Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged*, the Committee for Economic Development sounded an alarm within the corporate community that "the demographic imperative" requires more aggressive intervention. As if in response, Lisbeth Schorr's *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage* (1988) chronicled programs that "work" for families and children living in concentrated poverty. Invariably, these programs were comprehensive, of necessity crossing the jurisdictional boundaries of "health," "social services," family support," and "education."

When children arrive at the school-house door "hungry, unwashed and frightened" (*America 2000*, p.7), they cannot be powerful learners if they are answered by adults insisting that "schools are not and cannot be parents, police, hospitals, welfare agencies or drug treatment centers" (p.7). The study of geography means little to a disoriented child; the study of plant nutrition means little to the malnourished. Even if our goal is supporting merely academic prowess rather than fulfilling loftier moral obligations to children, we shall have to meet students' developmental needs if we are going to help them—and us—meet America's educational goals. We know how to do this. Limited examples already exist nationwide. What we need is the will to take these examples "to scale."

The School As Academic Stronghold vs. the School As Neighborhood Resource

Children growing up in areas of concentrated poverty cannot easily see the connections among schooling and employment. As William Julius Wilson argues in *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), children who live in a depressed, socially isolated, inner-city community where adult joblessness is the norm lose the explanatory connections that motivate them toward academic achievement.

For schools to become meaningful forces in these children's lives, they will have to become meaningful to parents, and re-establish the positive sense of community and neighborhood allegiance characteristic of schools in stable communities. Thus, the school must be reconceptualized not just as a human services center for its children, but also as a neighborhood resource for its adults.

We already know how to meet this challenge. But our progress has been stymied—not by the lack of know-how but by lack of financial support and political will. The loss of funds for the so-called "lighted schoolhouse" is mourned in communities across America. We were doing the right thing, but we stopped. We can start again.

Homogeneity vs. Diversity

The Scandinavian hue of this St. Croix retreat reflects only one of the many colors in America's kaleidoscope. Minneapolis, for instance, boasts the highest per capita in-migration of African-Americans in the United

[1]Some sections of this treatise are taken from Lipsitz, J. (1990). "Public Policy and Young Adolescents: A 1990s Context for Researchers." *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 2, 20–27.

States. The size of its Southeast Asian population is second only to California's. The wealth of this diversity poses formidable challenges for curriculum, assessment and professional development and raises difficult questions.

Put starkly, is the role of publicly-supported schooling to decrease or to embrace social diversity? The answer to this question will affect what students learn, what tests assess, and how teachers' academic and behavioral expectations will be encouraged by pre-and in-service professional courses. The vastness of cultural and experiential disparities that comprise the "new demographics" poses the greatest single challenge to a "populist crusade," and the possibility of creating "a restoration of what we think is important, a homecoming in sound values and community attitudes" (*America 2000*, p.27). Whose "home" shall we come back to? At present we have no mechanisms for engaging in productive public discourse about the necessary tradeoffs between homogeneity and diversity. We do not know how to decide—and the decision is too important to be left to the schools.

Schooling vs. Education

The most radical recommendation (in the sense of getting at root causes) in *America 2000* is the fourth: "Each of our communities must become a place where learning can happen" (p.2). To recall the community—its museums, libraries, parks, community centers, voluntary organizations and other youth-serving institutions—to its historical educative role would constitute a goal worthy of being called a "national crusade." If schools cannot "do it all," as we hear so often, then communities must reaffirm the importance of an entire supportive network of educational institutions, and that network must be governed and financed accordingly.

America 2000 acknowledges the fragmentation in our educational system without confronting it. Ambitious national goals must address not only schooling but education—and seek to build enriched and enriching "communities where education really happens" (p.21).

We know very little about how to make this happen. Lawrence Cremin began the discussion when he insisted upon a distinction between "schooling and education." It is time for us to continue.

Re-Setting the Scene: Integration vs. Separatism

It may be time, finally, to admit to concerns about the battlefield of the New American Civil War. Perhaps the social equity agenda of the past 30 years has become a luxury superseded by more pressing concerns. Perhaps children in increasing numbers are so bereft of familial and economic supports that their needs are not being met, and, more importantly, cannot be met by current configurations of public schools.

Making explicit this implicit argument is social dynamite. It removes the civil rights agenda of the 1960s from the primacy of its position in determining social policy. It argues, by implication, that too many children of poverty now cannot gain access to the benefits of schools' civil rights agendas. It reasons, again by implication, that policies set on behalf of "equity" are increasingly inequitable. It implicitly recommends policies that tolerate separatism. It argues that a social agenda of saving children in serious jeopardy must take precedence over any other public policy. If this is the argument underlying *America 2000*, it is time to break the silence. If it is not, it is time to ask, "why not?"

TOWARD A FOCUSED RESEARCH AGENDA

Michael W. Kirst

"We need such overarching priorities to guide both research and practice; what we don't need is more random innovation."

Will the R&D component of *America 2000*, envisioned as the New American Schools Development Corporation, result in the creation of a systematic research program? Will it enable educators to discover effective components and approaches and to distinguish them from good ideas that don't pan out? The answers are not yet clear. The President's initial proposal appears to be oriented more toward the delivery of technical assistance to stimulate random innovation, than toward an effort to improve education through a carefully designed research program.

An Experimental Schools Program similar to the "New American Schools" effort called for by President Bush in April 1991 flopped in the 1970s because there was no adequate research base for the programs. A $55 million experimental effort, in operation from 1970–76, passed into history without substantially improving existing knowledge. Although the programs generated interest, they left no long-term residue to help other schools work better. Similarly, the current Administration's demonstration schools appear long on development, and short on a research strategy to find comparative effectiveness and affordability for different education models.

Development projects must often do many things at once making it very difficult to evaluate which factors lead to change. Random, disconnected experimentation without systematic research to determine which efforts lead to either positive or negative results are ineffective in developing long-term improvements. Indeed, the Experimental Schools Program developed under President Nixon was used primarily as a way to provide soft money for financially-strapped local school districts.

I would hope the Bush Administration learns from this costly experience and pays attention to the ideas outlined in the National Academy of Education report, *Research and the Renewal of Education*. It sets clear goals for research which can be used to guide change. We need such overarching priorities to guide both research and practice; what we don't need is more random innovation. Without such guidance and an adequate research component to document effectiveness, the *America 2000* R&D plan may repeat the mistakes of the Experimental Schools initiative. For example, the President's press release cited Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools and James Comer's School Development Program as models, but there is very scanty research on these efforts to guide replication or even document long-term impact on pupils. A case in point: recent data indicate significant declines in pupil outcomes in the New Haven, Connecticut schools where Comer intervened. Sizer's "Essential Schools" are in a fairly early stage of development and the research effort to document impact has not been completed.

Some of the unanswered research and evaluation issues in the President's proposal include:

- Is the program directed at the same outcomes and trying to demonstrate the efficacy of different strategies to reach the same end?
- Will there be a careful investigation of the stages of implementation needed to achieve substantial change?
- Will there be different demonstrations tailored to specific subgroups of pupils such as limited English speaking or disadvantaged?
- How will they attribute causation from the multiple interventions the new models embody?
- What are appropriate indicators of success?
- Will each model have a "program theory" detailing the processes by which change is to occur and the assumptions about causal links?
- How will the likely variation in outcomes and implementation be handled?[1]

The President provides leadership at the right time in the right direction. We *do* need the kind of less constrained and large scale experiments that the President recommends. The general direction of his proposal makes an important break with past research policy which emphasized small scale, short-term interventions. Patterns of support for education research have been episodic and hampered by changing demands, vacillating leadership, unstable commitments, and school site constraints.

Almost all education research has not been funded at levels sufficient to allow intensive and comprehensive experimentation and collaboration with education practitioners. The paucity of longitudinal experiments and demonstration has resulted in an overabundance of "snapshots," studies of specific treatments and interventions, without a systematic knowledge base established over time and under varying circumstances. Foundations and businesses, which have the power to spark innovation through funding priorities, tend to fund "action projects" that can be widely franchised with a limited research base to justify their dissemination.

I disagree with critics of the President's program who say that the existing array of schools contains all the necessary variations, and we should merely do more research on current promising practices. Schools are highly constrained by various laws, regulations, non-government policies (e.g., SAT and the Carnegie units), and organizational rigidity. The New American Schools Development Corporation is needed to break loose from these impediments, but it will not have much impact if the alleged success is merely based on positive statements by promoters.

[1]The writer acknowledges the suggestions of Carol Weiss of Harvard University in framing these questions.

THE ESSENTIAL FEDERAL ROLE

Gordon M. Ambach

"The major lesson of federally-funded programs over the past quarter century is that if they are maintained in separate categorical pockets, if they are managed through organizations or units which do not have central responsibility for education, and if they are not designed to implement schoolwide and comprehensive change, they will not be successful."

The Congress and the President have a unique opportunity to cast a new direction for federal programs to reshape the education of American students for the 21st Century. The context is right and the elements can be combined to enact federal legislation which would be as significant for the improvement of American education as was enactment of the National Defense Education Act in 1958 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. What is needed is a comprehensive program which (1) is designed to achieve national goals for eduction by focusing federal action on the national goals; (2) builds on effective federal programs, well tested through the past quarter century; and (3) uses the framework of S. 2, Strengthening Education for American Families Act, incorporating initiatives agreed upon by the President and the Senate and House leadership in late 1990 (H.R. 5932), combined with parts of the President's new program, *America 2000*.

Agreement on national education goals has come with great speed and with the sense of need for national consensus on action to achieve them. Agreement on strategies for implementation, and particularly the specific federal role in education, has been much more difficult. Achievement of national goals requires that the major elements of federal intervention—federal support to assure access and equality of opportunity; federal support of research, demonstration and innovation; and federal support of staff development—are all used to the fullest extent. This new federal effort must be built around a coordinated use of federally-sponsored activities connected directly with state and local actions to reform schools. If any of these essential elements is separated out or dealt with in separate packages or by separate authorities, the potential for effective reform is diminished. The major lesson of federally-funded programs over the past quarter century is that if they are maintained in separate categorical pockets, if they are managed through organizations or units which do not have central responsibility for education, and if they are not designed to implement schoolwide and comprehensive change, they will not be successful.

The strategy for achieving goals 2, 3, and 4 is of great concern. If federal programs are to be a driving force for education change, four concepts which have been well established in restructuring business, military and other services, must be applied to large-scale system change in education:

1. Extensive design of strategies which integrate actions to move from the present, step-by-step, to desired high performance schools. This design work must be done by the responsible authorities who control the resources of the education systems, assisted by the best expert advice available. The parts of system change—R&D, staff development, technological change, implementation and assessment—must be aligned through an integrated change strategy.

The lessons of federal, state, and privately-supported efforts of 25 years indicate that piecemeal programs addressing components of the system do not result in systemic change. When R&D is done through one jurisdiction, staff development through another, learning technologies through yet another—these separate efforts, which may result in isolated positive results, do not add up to systemic change. When federal programs are administered sometimes through the states and sometimes directly from the Department of Education to LEAs, there is no cohesive or multiplier impact from the federal expenditures.

Federal funds for change of elementary and secondary education (6 percent of total expenses) must be linked with state and local education funds if leverage for change is to occur.

2. Proposals must be shaped on the basis of existing research. There are two enormous gaps in the Administration's proposals: First, privately-supported R&D program is not directly connected with the institutions that operate schools, SEAs and LEAs. Second, the effort is not linked with any increase in federally-funded R&D or with the administration and use of federally-funded R&D.

I cannot comprehend why the Secretary and President consider a private research effort to be the centerpiece for system change for the most important function of government—education. Private enterprise may help, but it is not sound to expect education R&D to be assigned to the private sector any more than the nation would assign R&D for health, security, transportation, or other services to private enterprise.

Privately-funded R&D is welcome but it must be linked with public systems and public authority to be effective. Congress should establish within DOE a major R&D institute, with counterparts incorporated in the states, for the purpose of connecting R&D with real systemic state and local problems and solutions. Private contributions for eduction R&D should be incorporated in a total program of this institute. Such contributions should be considered an incentive to expand federal funding for R&D through a matching program. Each private dollar should generate an additional federal dollar for R&D. This would double the effect of private effort and could lead to support on the order of $400 million; link the program directly to state and local R&D; and connect the R&D program to the development of high performance schools by state and local agencies.

It is essential to remember the magnitude of reforming American education, a system with more than 100,000 schools and $230 billion of expenditures. Schools must be reformed one by one, but they cannot be reformed unless local and state systems provide the leadership, assistance and support for reform, or unless there is a plan for effective multiplier effects from early models to widespread practice. The task may start with 535+ schools but the design for multiplication must rapidly reach 1,000 and 10,000 and tens of thousands in this decade. It is imperative to concentrate federal funds on this task and to link this federal effort with state and local plans for the change to high

performance. Even with all the federal education programs aligned now in such an effort, the total federal leverage would be around five percent of expenses. Federal funds should therefore be used to leverage state and local funding for change.

3. Restructuring of business and the military has occurred only where personnel have been trained extensively and continuously to change the way they work. Restructuring requires personnel to work smarter. It does little good to work smart with yesterday's or last year's methods, practices or equipment; workers must keep current and that means substantial continuing investment in training.

A key part of federal initiatives for educational change is staff development, both preservice and on the job. Teacher training was at the heart of NDEA. It has been a part of federal programming in various acts, such as the Higher Education Act. But funds for this purpose are far below the need if education practice is to change. *America 2000* proposals for professional development are clearly underfunded.

4. The driving force for restructuring business, military, and other services has been *technological* change. Examples of change through developments in computation, automation, robotics, and telecommunications are abundant. Yet, learning technologies are still the stepchildren of education. For the most part, technology and technological change is at the margin of education practice. It will stay there unless strategies for change incorporate requirements for use of learning technology at the core of education restructuring. Separate categorical programs for learning technology must be incorporated into R&D efforts, support for high performance schools and staff development programs.

These four points lead to the crafting of a major "national goals bill" (like S. 2) which connects research and development, high performance school start-up grants, professional development and support of learning technologies in one comprehensive program. This program should be built on state plans developed by state education agencies which connect federal initatives with state and local restructuring programs that lead to high performance schools for all children.

Finally, I comment on the proposals for the use of federal funds in "choice" programs. I recommend that provisions for demonstration programs of parent involvement and choice in enrollment be included in the comprehensive "America 21" program being developed in the Senate. The House approved these provisions. The Administration and Senate leadership agreed to them and they form an appropriate authorization for testing or demonstrating the use of federal funds for "choice," much in the same way federal funds were used in the 60s and 70s in demonstrations, such as the Alum Rock School District program. Through such demonstration efforts, it is possible to test the feasibility and desirability of various forms of choice, including the payment of public funds for the support of education of children in private schools. Through such demonstrations, it is possible to cause court tests, if that is the intention of the Congress or Administration. Furthermore, it is a vehicle through which the Administration may choose to test the concept advanced in the definition of a "public school" as a school which serves a public purpose and is under public authority.

I oppose a large-scale federal program of certificates for choice or the significant alteration of Chapters 1 and 2, programs which already provide services for children in nonpublic schools. The energy and resources which might be committed to such efforts should be built into the central thrust of a restructuring program which provides research, development, staff training and learning technologies to develop high performance schools. If states and localities wish to expand public school choice programs, then state and local resources should be used for this purpose. States and localities have already demonstrated they will do this if they believe it an important part of their education policy.

Choice debates must not distract the Congress and Administration from accomplishing the real objectives of strengthening all schools to such a level of performance that there are top quality schools available for every parent or child to select.

REFORM WITHOUT A SUPPORTIVE POLICY SYSTEM CAN'T SUCCEED!

Susan H. Fuhrman

"Three questions arise: Why is the policy system important for school-level improvement? What policy approaches might best support school-level improvement? What can the federal government do about policy support for schools?"

A number of aspects of *America 2000* warrant praise, especially the call for consensus around high standards and the focus on R&D. I would also raise notes of caution. For example, can we develop a national assessment system that, unlike exams in many industrialized nations, is not used to track and sort students? Can we include private schools in choice programs without diverting support from public education or promoting separatism? How can we improve the "other 91 percent" of a child's life spent outside the school without dramatic increases in funding for preschool, health programs and other social services?

Leaving such queries to others, I focus on how *America 2000* components might lead to system-wide improvement. As a policy researcher, I worry about *America 2000*'s relative silence concerning the *policy system* which is essential to support school improvement. Three questions arise: Why is the policy system important for school-level improvement? What policy approaches might best support school-level improvement? What can the federal government do about policy support for schools?

Why is the Policy System Important for School Improvement?

Providing researched models of redesigned schools and starting or reshaping 535 + schools is not enough to produce widespread improvement. Doing so is nice, but not sufficient, even with national standards and assessment to provide goals for all schools and students. Here are some reasons why:

- **The system can easily subvert school-level improvement.** Any number of current state and local policies run counter to *America 2000*'s emphasis on challenging content and innovative schools. Examples are requirements for standardized tests that tend to emphasize broad coverage and quick "right" answers over understanding; requirements for minimal competency tests that focus on low-level skills; requirements for time spent on subjects or course offerings that divide the curriculum into narrow subject bites; and teacher licensing criteria that stress credit collection over deep content knowledge. In addition, school efforts to create coherent experiences for students are frustrated by the proliferation of discrete, often disconnected, programs aimed at particular social problems, no matter how important. Other handicaps emanate from the private sector. For example, in response to diverse markets, textbook and material publishers tend to water-down controversial issues and cover as many topics as possible, sacrificing depth. School-based innovations frequently wither when the system sends unsupportive or conflicting messages.
- **School innovation is hard to spread.** Even if system constraints were removed, there are formidable problems in replicating successful models. We do not know much about how to propagate success; too often research on successful schools fails to separate the unique from the generalizable. We know that leadership is important, but not how to grow visionary leaders. Tradition holds back many schools. Further, the most willing experimenters often have resources to devote to planning and change. Whether they are relatively wealthy to begin with, receive foundation, corporate, state or local funds, or *America 2000* grants, these initial innovators are likely to have special support that will not be available to enhance creative change in the rest of the nation's over 100,000 schools. Too often it is the relatively advantaged schools that innovate; the schools serving less-advantaged children usually get left behind.
- **Policy leadership is required to generalize success.** We've never had a problem devising experimental programs and developing successful demonstrations. Our problem lies in making *all* schools successful, a challenge having far more to do with policy leadership than with designing models of success. It is not enough to simply remove policy constraints, as *America 2000* suggests with regard to regulatory flexibility. The real task is to assure that the system actively promotes school improvement for *every* school.

What Policy Approaches Might Support School-Level Improvement?

Active policy leadership for school improvement has several components:

- **Clear outcome goals that specify the knowledge and competencies all students should have.** These should be challenging goals that emphasize problem-solving, reasoning, understanding and deep content knowledge.
- **Coherent messages from policymakers that reinforce outcome goals.** What we expect students to know should be covered in curricular frameworks provided to guide schools, the materials they use, the staff development provided to teachers, and the assessments used to hold schools accountable. All these elements must be coordinated.
- **Teacher education and licensing systems that assure that prospective teachers can teach the knowledge and skills expected of students.**
- **Extensive assistance programs that help schools improve student achievement** on the content goals and reshape their programs to stress teaching for understanding. Much of this help would be in the form of technical assistance that draws on lessons learned from successful models, but resources to facilitate planning for change are also likely to be necessary.
- **School-level flexibility in developing specific curricula, within the framework expected for all students, and instructional strategies that best meet the needs of their students.** Deregulation, school-based decision-making and choice policies promote flexibility, but work best as elements of overall policy support for challenging instruction.
- **Attention to resources.** While much school redesign might be accomplished through reallocation of existing resources, there are fiscal issues that transcend the need for start-up planning money. Despite

school finance reforms, some schools continue to have much less to spend than others, and many are simply overwhelmed by the mismatch between resources and needs. This important equity issue speaks to the reality of expecting all schools to meet new content goals. Finance policy must support content goals by assuring that every school has adequate resources. Furthermore, if new assessments, staff development, and technical assistance are to support meaningful improvement, they must not be financed on the cheap.

Some necessary support for school-level improvement is beyond the reach of education policy. Employers, colleges and universities, and parents must reinforce the importance of content goals. Shoring up system support also requires improvements in related social service areas. Some of this support is not best expressed in terms of specific programs and policies. The sustained commitment of policymakers, realistic expectations about the time-lag between policy improvements and results, avoidance of "sexy" programs that bring fame to the sponsor but detract from the main thrust, and the willingness of policy makers to cooperate across institutional, committee and sectoral boundaries are key factors.

What Can the Federal Government Do?

Much of the work to improve policy support for school improvement needs to be done at the state level. With responsibility for both K–12 and higher education, as well as teacher licensing, states have powerful policy levers at their disposal. Districts, too, play an important role in providing support for school-based change. Nonetheless, the federal government's leadership is vital within and beyond the context of *America 2000*. The federal government can:

- **Take steps to assure that national standards and achievement tests are not just one more set of goals and tests layered on top of others,** thus cluttering the policy environment. Actions might include: a) designing processes for developing widespread consensus about core subject-matter goals; b) streamlining the New World Standards so there is room to add equally challenging content expectations important to particular environments and to allow schools necessary flexibility; c) considering how various purposes of testing—for example, individual motivation, the reinforcement of curricular goals, and accountability—affect the design, administration, and costs of new tests; d) taking advantage of the head start provided by states which have made progress on new content objectives and assessment to avoid duplicating or undermining such efforts; and e) encouraging the removal of old tests made obsolete by the new. Above all, we must not rush into new testing that is less than credible or legitimate.
- **Include teacher preservice education in *America 2000*.** Use incentives to encourage states to revise licensure to reflect the content and skills in the New World Standards and their unique, additional objectives; encourage disciplinary associations to facilitate cooperation between university arts and sciences and teacher education faculty; recognize and disseminate models of teacher education programs that prepare teachers for the new demands. Coordination with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is important to assure that knowledge and skill expectations for licensed and Board-certified teachers are on the same track.
- **Assure that the R&D teams for New American Schools address policy support** for school redesign and the spread of promising approaches.
- **Think about how *America 2000* Communities coincide with other levels of governance.** The last thing we need is another layer of government in education.
- **Assure that technical assistance for school improvement is both sustained and ample** by directly funding it and/or encouraging states and districts to support it.
- **Consider the need for start-up costs** for school change beyond the 535+ schools in the first round.
- **Provide grants to states to encourage coordination of their curricular frameworks, materials policies, teacher professional development policies and assessment policies around high outcome goals.** The National Science Foundation Systemic State Initiatives program is an example of this wise approach.
- **Revisit the possibility of a federal role in encouraging school finance equity and adequacy.**
- **Be realistic about the role of report cards and regulatory flexibility in spurring change.** School report cards generally provoke much less reaction than their sponsors hoped. Removing rules helps, but only in the context of overall improvement efforts.
- **Finally, provide a model of sustained political commitment to an improvement strategy.** Keep attention focused, avoid veering off in new directions, and provide follow-through.

WHERE'S THE COMMUNITY IN *AMERICA 2000*?

Milbrey W. McLaughlin

"America 2000, for all of its attention to localism, is a top-down strategy that makes schools the target for reform, but writes the key actors within them out of the action."

America 2000 moves beyond a single focus on schools as the agent of reform to consider the important roles of families, communities, and the private sector in stimulating and supporting high quality education. This broader strategic view is a strength of President Bush's proposal and an important departure from past reform efforts which essentially located responsibility for both the problems and solution with the schools. Schools can't do it alone.

America 2000's formulation of the challenge of education reform as a school by school matter also incorporates lessons from past reform efforts, most particularly that effective responses are locally devised and responsive to local needs and conditions. This bow to localism does not mean that expertise and constructive invention cannot be effectively applied in diverse settings; it does mean that local knowledge is critical to that construction and application. The problems faced by schools, educators and families in East St. Louis, IL differ in critical and fundamental ways from those found in Seattle, WA, Cedar City, UT or Wheeling, WV.

But much is missing here that experience suggests is important to educational reform and so to the Administration's ambitious goals. In particular, *America 2000* seems to ignore the people charged with making the whole thing work—educators—and to gloss over the realities, complexities and challenges facing today's schools.

One of the most important lessons from more than two decades of reform efforts is that policy of any sort can't mandate what matters. Policy can't command the commitment, energy, enthusiasm necessary to devise improved practices and nurture them. These important attitudes are fostered and sustained in large part by a sense of ownership, of responsibility for change. But teachers' voice and critical role in any educational change effort is not evident in the Administration proposal. Incredibly, missing from the listing of "Who Does What" is the education community! *America 2000*, for all of its attention to localism, is a top-down strategy that makes schools the target for reform, but writes the key actors within them out of the action. To the extent that teachers or the education community have no effective voice in matters that affect the educational enterprise, we should not be surprised if they do not accept responsibility for disappointing consequences. [The very effective role of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in devising new mathematics curricula and standards provides a case in point of the important contribution educators can make to educational reform, given the opportunity, charge and support to do so.]

Likewise, where do the agencies responsible for administering and overseeing the education enterprise fit? *America 2000* is silent on the roles of school districts and state education agencies. The Model Cities program and its kin taught us that back channel efforts, efforts that exclude the "establishment," are unlikely to succeed in the long run.

Omission of these critical actors—teachers, administrators, education agencies—corrodes the important and essential sense of ownership and commitment to the endeavor. *America 2000* feels all-too-much like yet another reform "done to" the schools. By excluding the voice of the education community it also ignores the important perspective that practitioners can contribute to the "crusade." *America 2000* appears to locate that expertise and information, so necessary to reform, outside the education system.

America 2000 also seems to slide over the realities of today's schools and classrooms. While higher standards and greater accountability may be a good thing, the Administration proposal appears to frame the problem of reform in terms of insufficient incentives for performance. Schools would do better, the strategy seems to presume, if only teachers and students would work harder. While industry is an undeniable ingredient to educational accomplishment, the reality of America's schools is much more complex and difficult. What good are tougher standards and curriculum in classrooms where student turnover means that teachers finish the year with less than one half of the original cohort? How effective will "world class standards" be in schools with insufficient resources to supply toilet paper? Where teachers are not assigned to classes until weeks, sometimes months, after the start of the school year? Where diverse cultures and needs challenge and often overwhelm even the most dedicated, industrious teachers? While proposed higher pay in such settings may encourage teachers to take and stay in such jobs, it will not enable them and their students to do better.

The federally-funded Teacher Context Center at Stanford finds that teachers' goals for their classrooms reflect this diversity and complexity. Only a small portion of teachers participating in our research specify "academic excellence" [as adopted by the Governors] as their primary classroom goal. In their judgement, other goals such as personal growth, work habits and basic skills are more critical for students who have insufficient academic motivation or preparation, traditionally defined, or difficult family circumstances.

Changed incentives comprise a weak treatment in the context of today's schools and classrooms for other reasons as well. Contrary to the pull-up-your-socks assumptions of *America 2000*, educators need support that extends beyond those outlined in the Bush proposal. Where will teachers acquire the skills and knowledge required to be effective with today's students? For example, if more than a third of the teachers teaching in secondary schools feel they are unable to be effective in helping their students learn, as the Context Center's research suggests, their need for assistance and support—for professional growth and development—overwhelms the modest resources envisioned for Governors' Academies.

Another important lesson of the past efforts to reform America's schools is that change is a problem of the smallest unit. Effective change is a problem of the competency, capacity, and attitude of teachers teaching in millions of classrooms across the country. *America 2000* does little either to enlist the commitment of teachers to the cru-

sade or to acknowledge what life is really like for students and teachers in a majority of America's public schools.

Finally, while a strong point of the Administration proposal is its emphasis on "break the mold" schools, these New American Schools likely will disappoint as an effective agent of reform if other lessons about planned change in education are overlooked. Information about HOW to get there from here is as important as knowledge about the nature of effective new processes and structures. Educators, if they are to profit from investment in America's New Schools, will need detailed information about how these schools changed as well as about the content of that change. Further, we need to ensure that these new schools are not "boutique" schools, using resources beyond the reach of most schools and classrooms, and that they tackle the tough problems that characterize many of America's schools—e.g., high rates of student mobility, diverse cultures and languages, dysfunctional families and communities.

The Context Center's research suggests that significant improvement in U.S. education will depend upon teachers' success in engaging the "new," nontraditional students in their classrooms. In those schools where we see success in this endeavor we find ongoing collaboration and learning among teachers—processes supported by fairly mundane but critical resources like space, time and mechanisms for discussing the day-to-day challenges of teaching. On-going problem solving and learning among adults, as well as students, is a critical feature of these teachers' and schools' unusual success. Will teachers be included in the "nation of students"? Their omission from the Administration's strategy is ironic when one considers that the success of *America 2000* will ultimately depend on what teachers are willing and able to do in their classrooms.

FIX THE KIDS OR FIX THE INSTITUTIONS?

Sid Gardner

"The proposals could also have talked about block grants with a soul—with new accountability that comes with new discretion . . . the federal government will permit more flexible funding, but with the understanding that community-wide report cards . . . would be published annually."

The Administration's education proposals are a whiff of fresh air—but not yet a full breath. To have an active national discussion under way is genuine progress, and to have involved the governors in that dialogue recognizes the reality of where leadership has to come from in reforming American public education.

But the Administration has still left out the rest of the community, and no schools are going to change without engaging the communities around them. The rhetoric of community involvement is brief, as though somebody realized it was completely missing and threw in the minimum acceptable language.

For those of us who believe that schools can't do it alone, the general references to business and community support aren't enough. A few more adopt-a-school projects, and a few more add-on grants to run drug prevention programs are not going to turn schools around—or even get their full attention.

Some Administration officials have spent much of the past two years exploring the once-lost continent of services integration. These policy leaders have set out a strong message about the need for schools to work with other public and private agencies in helping students who are found in many agencies' caseloads at the same time. But little of that message, unfortunately, has found its way into this document.

What could the proposals have done? *America 2000* could have challenged city and county governments to help schools, the way they are beginning to in San Diego, Los Angeles, Savannah, and other communities around the nation. The proposals could have provided major new incentives for local leaders to put together their federal grants in locally-designed, bottom-up block grants.

The proposals could also have talked about block grants with a soul—with new accountability that comes with new discretion, so the message to the states and the schools is that the federal government will give you more flexible funding, but with the understanding that community-wide report cards, not just report cards on schools alone, would be published annually. Report cards for the whole community would let citizens and parents see what is happening to children and families across their communities.

There isn't yet a single community in the nation that is annually monitoring the school-readiness of all its youth, or the number of low birth weight babies as part of a scorecard of community indicators. Yet, we are getting much closer to that time. The Administration could have given a major endorsement to the work of private foundations and statewide advocacy groups that are working to develop annual report cards on the schools and all other child-serving institutions.

The tone of the Administration's document is still "let's fix the kids," with an assumption that fixing the *institutions* that serve the kids will all be taken care of by vouchers and more rhetoric. Budget constraints have been allowed to overwhelm the parallel reforms in children's services that are needed to make education reforms a reality.

It isn't hard for Republicans to address issues of institutional reform, if they want to. Here in California, Governor Pete Wilson has shown how moderate Republicans can combine budget stringency with new preventive measures, through his Healthy Start proposal for school-linked services throughout the state. This is new knitting together of schools and the full range of multiple services that many of the most at-risk students need.

But at the national level, it takes an awareness that headline-grabbing initiatives are less important than equipping schools and their community partners with the tools they need to help students.

It also takes confronting Congress on its own part of the problem—the congressional mindset which sees every problem as needing a new, small, token-funded federal program to address every symptom. That mindset is what led to the categorical nightmare our public schools now face when they try to work with their most at-risk students. An administration unwilling to work with the Congress to reform the categorical confusion will merely preach at them—not get down into the guts of the machinery and make it work better.

Another missing piece in the Administration's proposals—one that seems especially absent to those of us in California—is a recognition of how diverse the nation's schools have become, and how much education reform needs to take that diversity into account. This isn't more debate about what is "politically correct"—it's a simple realization that if counselors can't speak a student's language or understand their parents' culture, they aren't going to be able to do much about those students dropping out of school.

The Administration's proposals would work best in Anglo, middle-class school districts—the ones that are already doing best. The Administration's data rarely disaggregate the data to see which groups are having the most problems, and that is also part of the problem.

Finally, there is also not much recognition of the lessons brought out so clearly in Seymour Sarason's new book, *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*. Sarason makes a simple, obvious, and inevitably overlooked point: the people who are going to have to change most are the people who are with the children most—the teachers. And if you don't talk to them about the changes, they probably won't understand or support them. This simple point is nowhere reflected in the Administration's proposals, and is usually left out of education reforms except at a rhetorical level.

America 2000 is a step in the right direction, but what is needed is more than a step. It is a journey, and schools aren't going to be able to get there if we just send them off with new demands and little help from the rest of the community's resources.

IGNORING THE LESSONS OF PREVIOUS SCHOOL REFORM

Edward J. Meade, Jr.

"One has to question a plan to develop "new" schools when the clear need is to assist existing schools *to meet the demands and needs both of the students in them and those of the nation."*

America 2000 reminds us how important schools are to the future of all the children in them and to the nation at large. Without quality schools, we—children, adults, the nation—all lose. While the Administration's strategy has merit in calling that fact to our attention, it is sadly deficient in addressing some matters that face our country's children, especially those children and youth we now consider "at-risk" due to circumstances of poverty, race, ethnicity, language or physical and mental handicaps.

First, the proposed strategy does not deal straightforwardly with issues of *access to and equity within schools for all children*. Rather, it speaks to ways to assess the performance of students in relation to particular goals and standards without addressing the capacities of schools and communities to help *all* students achieve those goals. Second, its strategy of privately-funded educational research and development—not publicly funded—represents an abrogation of the federal government's responsibility to the improvement of education. I doubt whether any such proposal would be made in other service areas, such as health and medicine. The absence of attention to equity and to public support for research and development are serious deficiencies.

While the strategy speaks about the capacity of schools to educate, it fails to take leadership in assuring that *all* children, particularly those "at-risk," will have the range of support services they will need to benefit from the quality of school that the strategy seeks. For example, the strategy reiterates the National Education Goals, one of which is that "all children in America will start school ready to learn" but offers no specific guidance or assistance to assure that will be the case. It is now well established that quality pre-natal and post-natal care and adequate nutrition for mothers and infants improve a child's ability to later profit from educational services. But, the strategy fails to offer solid proposals to assure that all mothers and babies will have access to these vital services. As more and more is known about the interrelationships among good health, good support services, and good education, *America 2000* fails to offer plans to bring about more coordination or orchestration of federal programs in these areas for these children. The failure to offer specific steps to bring about more effectiveness in providing *comprehensive* services—health, social services and education—is disappointing.

Another point of the President's strategy is to create "New American Schools." To its credit, the strategy does make mention of some initiatives already underway, including the Coalition of Essential Schools and Accelerated Schools, to name two. But, once again, it makes no mention of equally—if not more—important initiatives that are demonstrating the effectiveness of comprehensive services—health, social supports and education—on the lives of many of our nation's most needy children, children whose futures are necessarily more dependent on these services than are children who come from more advantaged and less denying circumstances. This oversight is regrettable.

One also has to question a plan to develop "new" schools when the clear need is to assist *existing schools* to meet the demands and needs both of the students in them and those of the nation. Moreover, there already are useful efforts underway to assist existing schools—including those school reform initiatives cited in the President's plan. Those efforts—those cited and others—are making progress. They are demonstrating how ongoing schools can be transformed. They are worthy of priority and support because they are dealing productively with changing existing public schools, real schools. Creating "new" schools—as proposed and whose designs would be dependent on privately-funded research and development—is hardly an effective way to change schools.

In addition, a strategy of creating "new" schools is hardly new. There are lessons that can be learned from past efforts which included the development of "new schools," e.g. the Ford Foundation's Comprehensive School Improvement Program in the 1960s and the federal government's Experimental Schools Program of the 1970s. From those examples we know that rarely do new school "models" illuminate or instruct other schools. And, if and when they do, the impact, while limited, requires a deliberate strategy for them to be useful to other schools. That strategy needs to include: 1) adequate documentation of what was done to make such "new" schools, what were the outcomes, and why did the outcomes result as they did; and, 2) specific plans and arrangements to use the "new" schools and those who work in them to assist other schools. Documentation enables existing schools to know what they need to take into account to create their own form of a "new" school that might succeed within their particular circumstances and contexts. Technical assistance from staff in the "new" schools allows for the transfer of knowledge and know-how to staff in other schools. However, even when these factors are in place, "new" schools have little effect on existing public schools unless those schools are also given direct attention and incentives to change.

Even if one accepts the limited vision as proposed for the New American Schools, the President's strategy pays little attention to lessons already learned. Over the past three decades I have had the privilege of being engaged in a number of efforts to improve schools in all kinds of communities with a diversity of students. Sometimes the initiatives were to spur on achievement for more academically-talented students; others were to curb or prevent students from dropping out of school. Still others were aimed at enhancing the quality of schools for the general range of students. In all, some general lessons have resulted:

- Students and teachers thrive in pleasant, safe, well-built and well-maintained schools. They, like employees in business and industry, do not function as well in unsafe, unhealthy, unpleasing facilities. Employers have already learned this critical lesson.
- Leadership is essential for improving schools and, more often than not, that leadership comes from a principal who helps teachers, students and parents to

build a vision and to collaborate in carrying it out.

- The most effective resources for teaching are teachers. Teachers—along with other instructional and counseling staff—represent the key to quality opportunities for learning in schools.
- Students learn better and teachers are more effective in smaller rather than larger classes. While there are no hard limits, classes under 20 to 25 are better than those that are larger.
- The uses of educational technology are made more effective when the machines and devices are part of the teachers' array of resources rather than when teachers are used as extensions or complements to the technology. We will not help students to be problem-solvers if their teachers are expected to serve machines (or workbooks and textbooks). Drawing analogies between the industrial assembly line and schools are *not* appropriate. Businesses, particularly those that rely on the capacities of their employees to think, analyze and solve problems (outcomes we expect in students) have already learned this lesson.
- There are no "best" ways to teach any more than there is a "best" curriculum or a "best" test. However, there are "better" ways and "better" materials that are appropriate within a broad curriculum framework such as those already developed in some fields (e.g., mathematics). The key is the ability of teachers to judge what materials and what ways for what students can such curriculum best be learned. That requires teachers to be current and informed about both content and pedagogy in fields (subject areas) for which they are responsible. That requires schools to assure that teachers will have the time and the resources to continue their professional development.
- Changing schools—reforming or restructuring them—is more effectively achieved when persons in the schools—teachers, counselors, administrator and parents—participate in both the design and execution of the changes. The strategy of the New American Schools pays little attention to this matter.
- Accountability is made more certain and more accurate when those who are held accountable (principals, teachers and other school staff) understand the expected objectives and goals and are allowed and expected to use their professional judgement on how the school's instructional effort shall function to achieve such goals. The New American Schools strategy also lacks this understanding.
- Smaller schools are generally more capable of changing faster than larger ones; elementary schools are generally more capable of changing faster than high schools.
- Schools that have solid working links with agencies that provide other services for students, such as health and social supports, are more effective in educating students who need these services than schools without such links.

Many of these "lessons" are already built into on-going efforts to reform or restructure existing schools and programs. The reform of our schools does not need to start with an entirely clean slate as the current strategy for New American Schools proposes. In short, this strategy—one presumably to create schools for America's future—shows little understanding about what has been learned from America's past efforts to improve schools. Moreover, it would drain both attention and support to current efforts of promise that are already making progress to improve and reform existing public schools, especially for at-risk students.

STEAMING BACKWARD TO 2000

William W. Wayson

"Creating and sustaining forums in which communities discuss what they can do to develop the best schools in the world might well be the best contribution to come from America 2000."

In *Up From Excellence* (1988), I predicted what *America 2000* now verifies: "eight years after. . . *A Nation at Risk*. . . we haven't turned things around in education." The reason is that the Excellence reforms and their implementation were flawed in predictably fatal ways. So, too, is the latest proposal, *America 2000*.

Throughout this document, one is tempted to ask "How?" Four decades of educational reforms should make us skeptical of high-sounding phrases which skirt the thorny issues of implementation. In the report's four-train metaphor, the ticket says we are bound for 2000, but no track has been built to get there.

What is Good in *America 2000*?

America 2000 re-emphasizes education's importance to America. It acknowledges that school buildings are the locus for improving schools, and that change must come school by school, not by caveat from state or federal legislatures or departments, nor even from school districts. The report also gives a passing nod to the need to approach improvements systemically, touching every aspect of the educational system from governmental action and community support to school personnel and policy makers.

Finding ways to "unleash America's creative genius to invent and establish a New Generation of American Schools" is a wise and forward practice for government to initiate. (Perhaps the most effective infusion of genius would be to create a GI Bill for Desert Storm veterans with provisions for added incentives for those entering educational occupations.) The document also proffers sound philosophy in its statement that "Education is not just about making a living; it is also about making a life" and its admonition to focus on outcomes, rather than solely on means. Proposed efforts to free educators from unnecessary constraints are also laudable (provided they do not undermine legislative efforts to assure services for children who have been historically neglected by local and state officials and the elites who chafe under federal laws and their oversight designed to prevent discrimination.)

Creating and sustaining forums in which communities discuss what they can do to develop the best schools in the world might well be the best contribution to come from *America 2000*. This is a wonderfully democratic activity that should benefit students in numerous ways. However, the decisions on who will take part in the "Distinguished Advisory Panels" and the other proposed action and decision groups will be highly political.

What are the Weakest Points?

What is good in *America 2000* may be enough to get the train going. A few bells will ring and a whistle may blow; but the steam won't carry it far, especially since our stalling economy denies states and localities the revenues they need just to maintain the schools.

America 2000's criticism of the present system is too encompassing to galvanize broad support. An extensive mechanism to identify, rename and reward a new set of "New American" and "Merit" schools is unnecessary unless the government wants the public to believe that none already exist. According to the Department of Education's School Recognition Program and other studies, many more than 535 schools are already in operation whose efforts could guide others.

Unfortunately, experience with countless reforms and demonstrations suggests that few schools or districts will adopt good practices from other schools. The nation needs leadership that attacks the forces that prevent innovation, including new-model governance systems, as well as model schools.

Telling the public that no good schools are out there, may be the Administration's ace in the hole. With very little effort, it can point to some successes in a few months and a few more in a few years—even if no real change has occurred.

Questions also might be raised about the proposed R&D teams. These should be informed by prior R&D experience under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. New efforts should focus on ways to disseminate findings more effectively, and ensure that they are used—without the taint of information control.

Comments such as "once R&D is complete and the schools are launched, the operating costs of the New American Schools will be about the same as those of conventional schools" and "R&D teams can be expected to set aside all traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints that conventional schools work under" reflect a disturbing naivete about R&D and educational change. Given the unconscionably wide differences in expenditures among school districts, good schools can be created at costs no greater than what is being spent in *some* schools. (Expenditures in Ohio districts, for example, not counting costs for buildings, range from over $13,000 per pupil to slightly over $2,000).

America 2000 has too narrow a view of the school's role and of what good teachers do. It adheres to the limited purposes that can be tested by norm-referenced tests. Education must go beyond what can be tested; it must improve the quality of life.

Discussing certification, for example, the report indicts requirements *unrelated to subject area knowledge or leadership ability*. Evidently, its vision falls far short of the wide-ranging skills and abilities good teachers demonstrate. Effective teachers influence students through a multiplicity of interactions, only a small fraction of which—however important—is centered upon the inculcation of subject matter. As a result, the related proposal to reward teachers for subject matter competence is necessarily flawed. Rewards given only in the subject matter areas will encourage teachers, and those who prepare them, to forsake the other essential dimensions of teaching.

As suggested by the discussion of alternate certification, narrow views can lead to poor policy. Admittedly, the present certification system for teachers and principals does not guarantee competence or quality, but deregulation's failures in other industries show

how public welfare can be jeopardized if over-regulation is replaced with anarchy.

The proposed "Report Cards" reflect the same narrowness of thought. Publicized results could stimulate public discussion about how to improve educational outcomes, but, as proposed, they are more likely to incite unfair comparisons. What can be tested easily and efficiently is a small part of what the fully educated person is and falls short of what the technological world requires to keep America on top.

Past experience suggests that proficiency tests will focus on isolated facts rather than integration, synthesis, analysis, application, and understanding. Test scores can be raised without any child's learning anything, and the public may be lulled into thinking that the problems are solved. The extreme difficulty of eliminating test bias is dismissed with the fatuous assertion that tests will be "screened to eliminate it."

America 2000 expresses unjustified faith in the power of competition as a motive for change. Its strategies reflect Napoleon's dictum that "Men will die for ribbons." Some will, but non-financial incentives propel only those who want them and who feel they are attainable. The Administration's proposed award system can be expected to positively affect student outcomes for no more than one-fifth of the school districts and about one-tenth of the students in the schools in America. Reform by bake sale will yield only crumbs of improvement.

The report offers no proposals for educating the poorest quartile of students who have been historically neglected in the schools, the ones who will comprise one-third of the labor force in the next two decades. It does point out that for many children the family is in a state of deterioration but says nothing about governmental policies, many of them federal, that have contributed to that plight.

Federal action and inaction for the past decade have left families to founder on shoals of unemployment, low wages, arbitrary hiring and firing practices, unsafe work conditions, poor health care, unfair taxation, increased poverty (particularly for working mothers and children), and discriminatory educational policies. Obfuscating the government's role in undermining the structure and moral fabric of American society will not improve education.

Extra money is proposed for teachers who teach in "dangerous and challenging" settings. Overlooking the blatant appeal to prejudice inherent in the term "dangerous", the prior use of incentives has not attracted large numbers of dedicated, competent teachers into ghettoized schools. Besides, policies that place competent teachers in miseducational school settings is a waste of scarce public assets.

The rhetoric of the *America 2000* report places exaggerated and unfounded reliance upon the reputedly successful techniques of business, industry and commerce. Schools today certainly are managed at least as effectively and efficiently as financial institutions, auto companies, airlines, and defense industries—and with far less federal help. Administrators, however, are precluded by ethics and lack of resources from using some of the techniques that enable business and industry to control their markets, misuse their workers, or buy off regulators or legislators.

Business may, of course, know something about educating people that schools would do well to emulate. Patrick Houston reports in *Business Month* (February, 1990) that corporations are investing to teach people to work in teams and to give the worker more flexibility, "not to turn him into a math whiz." Industrial educators have discovered that education occurs more easily when "courses are student centered and all grades are verboten." The authors of *America 2000* could have suggested improving schools by making them student-centered and eliminating the use of school marks (as the New Zealand schools did).

The report is ambiguous about which schools will participate in the choice programs. By speaking of "all schools that *serve the public and are accountable to public authority, regardless of who runs them*," *America 2000* challenges the judiciary to reconsider the Constitution. The debate over which schools are "accountable to public authority" could provide grounds for relieving non-public schools from any public accountability even if vouchers are not extended to them.

Choice as it has been recommended is a program for special interests. The federal government has had evidence since 1981 that shows that poor people do not make choices even when they are offered. Furthermore, a voucher paying only $600 toward a $3000 education is a worthless piece of paper to a poor parent, but a windfall subsidy to a parent already sending a child to a private school.

In conclusion, the central issue in education today is reaffirming the social contract that guarantees every child a comprehensive education, which will enable him or her to achieve personal fulfillment and to contribute to a productive and peaceful society.

Whether that child is carried to that destination on tides or trains makes little difference if he gets there. When the tides are froth and the trains are toys, neither he nor we will ever arrive. The children, America and its future will have to wait in the station until a new metaphor or a new resolve comes along.

POLITICS & PERFORMANCE: AIRING SOME NETTLESOME ISSUES

Thomas Toch

"Encouraging educational innovation by turning private, religious, and for-profit schools into "public" schools, as the Administration proposes, is a questionable proposition."

The Bush Administration's *America 2000* education blueprint is a masterful political document: The timing of its release already has helped the President's re-election bid in 1992; it places responsibility on the Democratically-controlled Congress to fund its key planks; and by setting mid-1990s implementation dates for what are perhaps its most ambitious proposals—535 new experimental schools (one in each Congressional district) and a national examination system—it virtually eliminates the possibility of the Administration's Democratic opponents using the *failure* of those initiatives against the President in 1992.

America 2000 also includes a number of provisions with the potential to help improve the performance of the nation's schools. If the federal "school recognition program" launched in the early 1980s is a measure, the Administration's "merit schools" proposal may well be able to spur schools to improve themselves. The large numbers of applicants to the recognition program demonstrates that schools like to win awards.

A national examination system tied to a national curriculum has the potential to bring some much needed coherence to the public school curriculum. The Administration's plan has the political wisdom of being voluntary. And it would leave local educators to select their own teaching methods and materials. To exert the right sort of influence in the nation's classrooms, however, new exams would have to be created. The plethora of achievement tests currently administered throughout the nation are largely multiple-choice measures of low-level skills. They skew the true nature of knowledge and learning. In many classrooms, they drive down the level of instruction by atomizing a subject or a curriculum into tiny testable bits of information. Pedagogically, they are bad news. But essay exams and other types of tests that require students to synthesize what they've learned and encourage teachers to convey to students a sense of how curriculum parts fit together will be expensive to administer—an issue the Administration has so far failed to address. Nor has the Administration adequately aired other nettlesome national testing issues. One major one: if students are going to be required to pass national exams to get a job or get into college, as the Administration proposes, what happens to students unlucky enough to live in communities that simply refuse to teach whatever national curriculum is developed?

The Administration's proposal for 535 "New American Schools" has the strength of infusing an ethos of change into the nation's public education system. The experience of Ted Sizer and other grass-roots reformers in recent years suggests that convincing communities of the need to do things differently in their schools is crucial to educational reform. But the slow progress of Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools also suggests the tremendous difficulty of forging new educational mindsets in the face of public education's deep commitment to the status quo. The proposed 535 experimental schools may help on this score, especially if the President himself spotlights the schools. Also of note is the Administration's proposal for a series of "new American school designs." To be drawn up by privately-funded research and development teams that are to help in the establishment of the 535 experimental schools, the designs would no doubt become important national educational models. The designs raise a question, however: as corporate-funded projects, will they serve the public's interest, say, in insuring that disadvantaged students get the best possible education?

But encouraging educational innovation by turning private, religious, and for-profit schools into "public" schools, as the Administration proposes, is a questionable proposition. Secretary Alexander has said that non-public schools receiving public monies would be required to meet all federal regulatory and civil rights standards. But the experience of the federal student aid program suggests that it would be difficult for Alexander to keep his pledge. The U.S. Department of Education, after all, has largely failed in its efforts to eliminate the abuses of the federal loan programs by unscrupulous for-profit trade school operators out to make a buck at Uncle Sam's expense. Largely as a result, taxpayers are footing the bill for $2.7 billion in student loan defaults this year. Given the Department of Education's poor track record with a few thousand trade schools, how can it possibly hope to police the tens of thousands of non-public elementary and secondary schools envisioned under the Administration's plan?

Nor, perhaps, is it necessary to funnel public monies to private schools to engender the educational innovation and parental choice that the President seeks. The rapid spread of magnet schools during the past decade suggests that there can be large measures of innovation and choice within public education. Using a specialized curriculum or nontraditional teaching techniques, and drawing students from beyond neighborhood attendance boundaries, magnets are proving themselves to be valuable models of innovation that are helping a wide range of students (only one-quarter to one-third of the nation's 5,000 or so magnets select students on the basis of grades and test scores). One example: Los Angeles's Animal and Biological Sciences Center, a science magnet located next to the city's Zoo, where officials have opened their research facilities to the school's students. In particular, magnets underscore the value of small, close-knit, specialized schools that have a clear mission shared by teachers, principals, parents and students alike. They represent a compelling alternative to the nation's large comprehensive high schools.

The federal government, through its funding program for school systems using magnets to desegregate, has been an important catalyst to the nation's magnet school movement. In addition to successfully reducing segregation in many school systems, the program has increased the degree of parental choice in public education and has encouraged a valuable measure of entrepreneurship among public school teachers and principals. Congress might do well to fund the development of magnets in all school systems, not just those that are desegregating. The

Bush Administration itself has proposed such a step.

The Administration's call for teacher retraining centers in each state is a good first step: the nation's 12 million public high school students take an average of one academic course a day from teachers who neither majored nor minored in that subject in college—a fact that is seriously undermining the nation's goal of strengthening students' grasp of core academic subjects. *America 2000* recommends centers that upgrade teachers' skills in math, science, history, geography and English. Unfortunately, the Administration's proposal to spend only a little more than $1 million per state on the centers won't allow very many of the nation's 2.3 million teachers to be retrained. In the post-Sputnik era, the feds spent several billion dollars retooling teachers of science, math and other core subjects; it was one of the best educational investments the nation has ever made.

The first of the six educational goals set by President Bush and the governors calls for all children to start school ready to learn. But the *America 2000* agenda offers no solid proposals to help achieve that readiness goal. Conventional thinking is that the best way for the federal government to improve school readiness is to fully fund Head Start. Certainly, making the pre-school program available to all eligible children would help. But Head Start also needs to be upgraded. Among its greatest weaknesses: teachers in the program are ill-paid, and too many are ill-trained. Congress also would be well-advised to consider readiness legislation proposed by Sen. Christopher Bond. Bond has called for a federally-funded "parents as teachers" program that would help parents of infants and toddlers teach their children "pre-learning skills." The legislation builds on a successful statewide parents-as-teachers program in Bond's home state of Missouri.

Another proposal not incorporated in *America 2000* would be for the federal government to sponsor a computer software clearinghouse. A major impediment to the wider and more effective use of technology in the nation's classrooms is the hit and miss nature of software selection. Many school systems simply lack the expertise and the money needed to buy and evaluate the burgeoning array of software on the educational market. A centralized system of "consumer reports" on classroom software (and hardware, for that matter) would likely be much more efficient.

There's also a step the Congress should perhaps not take: spending more money on the Chapter 1 program for disadvantaged students, as least as it's currently constituted. As the single largest federal elementary and secondary education program, one that reaches into every Congressional district, Chapter 1 has few public detractors. But all the available evidence suggests that the $6 billion program improves only marginally the performance of the students it serves. The cost of administering the program is very high. And the help that many students receive under Chapter 1 is frequently too little to make much difference: a few hours a week of tutoring in basic skills by frequently ill-educated and underpaid aides. U.S. Department of Education officials acknowledge the weaknesses of the program; they also acknowledge that improvements to the program enacted by Congress in 1988 are being implemented slowly and are having only minimal impact on the program's performance.

The Administration's proposal to allow a limited number of students the opportunity to spend their Chapter 1 monies at non-public schools would only further dilute the effectiveness of the Chapter 1 program. An alternative approach would be to concentrate the program's resources on providing more comprehensive services for fewer students. Spending $6 billion a year on reorganizing entire schools that educate high concentrations of disadvantaged students would likely produce better results than isolated tutoring programs. Congress nudged the Chapter 1 program in the direction of whole-school programs in 1988; perhaps it's time to push harder.

A MIXED BAG FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Forrest P. Chisman

"The Administration's commitment to sound literacy legislation is rhetoric, not reality."

Aside from its insistence on school choice and national testing, the overall strategy of *America 2000* is to "let a thousand flowers bloom," fertilized by a light dusting of federal incentives, exhortations and ideas. The positive aspect of this approach is that it signals an openness at the White House, Department of Education, and other agencies to new ideas from pretty much any source—a dramatic change from the recent past.

The disappointing aspect is that *the nation has a right to expect more*. "Let a thousand flowers bloom" may be a sound approach to policy if you don't know exactly what to do, or if you think there is no single right course to steer. But is it possible that after decades of debate, research and experimentation in the education field, the Administration can't find any strong ideas beyond choice and testing to anchor the federal role? If so, *America 2000* reflects very badly on either the Administration, or the education reform movement, or both. And *the resulting clutter of proposals is unlikely to generate the grass roots understanding or support that a "thousand flowers" strategy requires to succeed.*

The strangest feature of *America 2000* is that it places responsibility for R&D to develop "New American Schools" in the hands of a new non-profit entity supported by voluntary contributions from large American corporations. Surely, this is *privatization taken to the extreme. What do we have an Education Department for if not to develop and manage R&D* of this sort? The problem is not that corporations are incapable of planning and funding this work. Rather, there is no reason to believe they are any more capable than anyone else. What grounds are there to expect that a new non-profit devoted to education reform will be any more successful than the numerous private philanthropic and corporate foundations that have been pursuing this issue for decades?

Of course, the new non-profit will be unencumbered by government red tape, and it will not have to run the gauntlet of Congressional scrutiny (which is a plus or a minus, depending on who you are). But if these are virtues, the Administration should be wary of linking both its reputation and the fate of one of its major proposals to a private body over which it will have no legal control. Moreover, someone is going to make a lot of money from the contracts let by this venture. *America 2000* says that contracts in 1992 will be awarded to "three to seven R&D think tanks, school innovators, management consultants, and others." Any prudent Administration should be wary about real or perceived conflicts of interest, unintended though they may be.

I will focus the balance of my remarks on the Administration proposals for adult and continuing education, which are fairly concrete. Section III of the *America 2000* document is entirely devoted to adult and continuing education. This is encouraging in itself: never before have the problems of adults received such prominence in an ambitious agenda for education reform. On the other hand, rhetoric has almost always exceeded reality in this field, so a fair estimate of the proposals can only come from a careful examination of what they say.

Section III contains six specific sets of proposals. Will they move us toward the National Education Goals? That depends on what you read into them. By an optimistic reading, they present the opportunity to enlarge on certain important themes. This is far from trivial: the invitation was not there before. By a less generous reading, the proposals range from wrong-headed, to hopeful, to pretty weak tea.

The proposals on adult literacy should be of greatest interest. After all, this is one area where a key assumption of *America 2000*—the assumption that the federal role in education is extremely limited—clearly does not apply. In fact, the federal government provides the lion's share of funding for literacy service in the United States and can shape the literacy system in any way it sees fit (although it has never made much of that opportunity).

Yet, to anyone who can read between the lines, the literacy proposals in *America 2000* are a disappointment verging on a shame.

The first proposal is to develop performance standards for adult education programs and to hold programs accountable for meeting them. If this means that the Department of Education will develop a laundry list of "do's and don'ts" for adult education, it would be a disaster. Top-down micro-management of this sort was long ago discredited in both the public and private sectors. At best, pursuing this path would lead to years of wrangling about whose list is best, followed by years of gaming the system. Of course, literacy programs should be held more accountable. But the important thing is accountability for *results*, and this can be expeditiously accomplished by requiring programs to: 1) evaluate (by any reputable means) the literacy levels of all new entrants into adult education, 2) help these learners set measurable goals for improving their skills, 3) measure and report progress toward those goals on a regular basis. Incredibly, most literacy programs don't do this in any systematic way. Accountability in terms of learning gains, rather than a list of "best practices," would revolutionize the field.

A second *America 2000* literacy proposal is to expand the National Literacy Assessment Survey, a test developed by the Educational Testing Service as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The federal government has already poured something like $10 million into it, because it is one of the best literacy tests available at the present time. Nevertheless, the ETS test manifestly does not provide a comprehensive measure of literacy or other basic skills. Nor is it clear that any one test can or should be used for that purpose. The ETS test can and should be improved, and in an improved form it would be of use in the short term. Over the long haul, however, it would be better to forget the sunk costs and go back to the drawing boards to determine what form literacy assessments should take. Moreover, everyone involved should be wary about over-selling the ETS test and about adverse effects on other perfectly valid measures such as California's CASAS assessment system.

The third literacy proposal is a pledge to work with Congress to enact sound literacy legislation. Unlike many of the ideas in

America 2000 this is not a "strategy" or a "long-term" proposal. It is a commitment to enact a "program," and the opportunity to do so is immediately at hand. If the Administration is in earnest about literacy legislation, it can complete this part of its agenda within a matter of weeks, or at most months. Most of the work has already been done. After careful deliberation, model literacy legislation (with the full backing of the literacy field) passed the House twice in the 101st Congress (H.R. 3123 and Title V of H.R. 5115), only to be pared down to a pale but still useful compromise bill because of opposition from the Administration. That compromise was passed by the House in January 1991 as H.R. 751 and is now currently hostage in the Senate as part of S. 2.

If the Administration or anyone else truly wants a vigorous attack on the literacy problem, they should adopt last year's House bills as their own. Or they should at least break loose the literacy provisions of S. 2 for rapid passage.

Tragically, the Administration's proposals sent to Congress on May 22, 1991, contain practically nothing about literacy. The one thing they do contain (a proposal for regional literacy centers) is a lame idea which, in the form the Administration presents it, was long ago rejected by Congress and the literacy field. If this is all it has to offer, the Administration's commitment to "sound literacy legislation" is rhetoric not reality. Hopefully, its promise to "work with Congress" means that more will be accomplished behind the scenes.

So much for literacy. Section III of *America 2000* contains two other proposals that clearly have value and should be vigorously pursued. The first is to continue the Labor Department's explorations of industry-specific core skill competencies and a certification process to go along with them. This is very important work, but it should not be over-sold. That would ruin a good thing. For example, it is far from clear whether defining core competencies in industry-specific terms is a useful way to think about the skills problem across the board. Nor is it clear when or how certification would help employers, workers or schools. Nevertheless, these are very serious ideas with an impressive intellectual lineage. The Labor Department work should provide a fair assessment of them, and Congress should certainly continue to support it.

But there should be no illusions: the DOL projects on core competencies (most notably the SCANS Commission) is an R&D effort, rather than a silver bullet. And it is only one of a great many promising ways to attack the problem of workforce basics. All of these should be explored. DOL is already on the trail of many of them, and its initiatives deserve support. Other public and private agencies also should be mobilized to investigate these issues. In fact, this seems a much more appropriate mission for the business-supported R&D foundation proposed by *America 2000* than the school reform agenda to which it has been assigned. Has anyone thought of writing workforce basics into its charter?

A second promising idea in Section III is a proposal to turn the federal government into a model employer in the area of upgrading workforce skills. This is one of the gems of *America 2000*: a true bull's eye of a proposal. Each year the federal government spends about $500 million on training for its one million civilian employees, but not a dime on upgrading their basic skills. By setting aside even five percent of current spending for this purpose, the government could at a stroke create a large-scale experimental laboratory in workforce basics that is desperately needed. And if the experiment succeeds, it could exert an enormous influence on industry at the same time that it improves the efficiency of the federal service. This is not mere speculation: Defense Department experimentation with basic literacy training for soldiers both improved military performance and led to major advances in the theory and practice of workforce literacy. Congress and the Administration should seize the idea of making the government a model employer and run with it hard.

In contrast to these promising ideas, the proposals in Section III for skills clinics and a National Conference on Education for Adult Americans rate low. At best, the former is premature until the R&D work on skill standards is completed. At worst, it ignores the harder issue of how to integrate the plethora of federal, state and local adult education programs. In fact, it would multiply the confusion by adding yet another program: skills centers. Consolidating the programs we have should be a high priority. Unfortunately, it is an issue most people are reluctant to address because so many turf barriers stand in the way. But if the Administration really wants to make a fresh start and get to the bottom of the problems of adult education, it must make a serious effort to consolidate programs in this field. If it does, every adult education program should be in a position to carry out the assessment and referral functions that the skills centers are intended to perform.

As for the Conference, it might be useful as a summative exercise after new initiatives are underway. But, the last thing in the world we need now is yet another conference on adult education. There is one almost every week in some corner of this vast land. At best, they chew over old bones. At worst, they distract limited time, energy and attention from the hard work required to make real progress in this field. Adult education has been hyped to death. Any high government official who doubts this assessment should have the courage to sit through the entirety of any adult education conference (rather than just making some remarks and running for a plane) before he or she recommends convening yet another one.

In sum, I give high marks to proposals to continue the DOL work on workforce basics and the idea of making the federal government a model employer in the adult education field. These will probably move the nation toward the National Goals, even if we cannot expect immediate results from either. Low marks go to the Administration's ideas about standards for adult education, testing and skills clinics. Each of these proposals has the virtue of opening the door for a serious discussion of important issues. The Administration's expressed commitment to literacy legislation is very welcome, although its legislative package casts doubt on how sincere that commitment is. It should join with Congress at once to show that it means what it says.

Much more than the sum total of all of these proposals will be needed to reach the National Goals. I hope that the *America 2000* proposals will be the beginning, not the end, of a discussion of what a full-fledged education strategy should be. You can't beat something with nothing, and the greatest disappointment will be if Congress and private groups do not come up with meaty and appealing alternative strategies in the months to come.

CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION

Joan L. Wills

"We must assume the status of an underdeveloped nation and create an agenda to support a Nation of Productive Workers—not just a Nation of Students."

The Bush Administration's long-overdue education strategy presents an opportunity to "unleash America's creative genius" and to improve the learning enterprise in the nation. If, that is, it is used, as all real strategic plans should be: as a working document subject to modification.

Most would accept *America 2000*'s assertion that the federal role is wisely limited in the overall scheme of financing and managing the learning enterprise. Yet, the plan cast aside, by its silence, any recognition of the need to refine and, perhaps, to restructure the federal role in achieving the six National Education Goals' desired outcomes.

Why, for example, is the promised "quid pro quo" of exchanging accountability for flexibility left up to "the field" to initiate? This cumbersome and inefficient process exhibits a lack of leadership. Is there so little information and knowledge already at hand—after almost a decade of asking the governors and the states to identify burdensome regulations—that it is not possible for the Department of Education to prepare a draft document and seek comments from the field? Surely, accountability is a two-way street.

And why is the plan mute on how to refine and improve the classic function of the federal government: to assume the lead responsibility in research and development? (Note the word is *development*, not demonstration. The plan is overloaded with the latter in some areas and woefully without it in others).

By placing the R&D burden in the hands of private corporations are we downgrading the historic federal role in R&D to a trivial position? Can we afford to do this? R&D provides the mortar in the foundation of the federal role in education. If the bold and complex strategy of *America 2000* is to be realized, it must be used for more than patch work.

One example—assessment—highlights the importance of R&D. It has major impact on the first five goals and the first three trains in the Administration's four-part strategy. In the U.S., it has often been observed that we only support that which we can measure. As a result, our nation is the recognized international leader in statistics and evaluation of governmental services. But, at times, our rhetoric gets ahead of our technical capacities to measure what it is we want to know and too often its uses become muddled. The results can be dangerous.

The President's plan, for example, is laced with unstated assumptions that a whole new set of assessment instruments will provide the backbone for new forms of performance standards and new accountability criteria. Yet, there is no promise that the federal government will support new research and development in this contentious field. Nor is there any suggestion that employing communities might need assistance from the federal government to modify or replace tests currently in use as screening tests in the hiring process.

Not surprisingly, much of the initial response to the proposed agenda of the National Goals Panel and the four-point education strategy has focused on the political consequences of a national testing system for the schools. Major control issues could eventually affect local governance practices, state decision-making and resource allocation patterns, and, indeed, opportunity paths for students. While such discussions about control are important, however, they do not capture the totality of the enormous implications the plan places on assessment of aptitudes, knowledged gained, and skills acquired. Solutions and new systems must be developed that go far beyond the politically-negotiated voluntary testing system advocated by *America 2000*.

Intergovernmental programs are moving increasingly towards performance-driven management criteria. This is evidenced by the JOBS program for welfare recipients, by proposed changes in JTPA legislation, adult and vocational education programs, and even by the rather vague criteria that there must be proof that students have the "ability to benefit" in order to receive student grants or loans. We must have a massive R&D effort that ties these strategies together, i.e., an assessment master plan. A new train that recognizes that testing and assessment tools must not discriminate against any group of individuals in our multicultural society needs to be put on a track of its own.

The Bush agenda fails to show how the federal government can fulfill its R&D responsibilities and how it will support the New American Schools Corporation. Yet, the Corporation's proposal should be supported. States and localities, in concert with the philanthropic community, have already led the way to create new forms of quasi-governmental organizational arrangements and this represents a similar worthy experiment. But its incredibly narrow proposed scope of activity is highly problematic. If the focus of the new Corporation only supports efforts within the K–12 schools and ignores the challenges embedded in the "Nation of Students" component of *America 2000*, a serious opportunity will be missed, one that strikes close to home for many businesses.

We must assume the status of an underdeveloped nation and create an agenda to support a Nation of Productive Workers—not just a Nation of Students. A bolder vision and a concomitant strategic plan are in order.

There are seeds of good ideas incorporated in the Nation of Students, but the foundation is weak and full of cracks. Measuring literacy levels is fine but not sufficient. Holding one more literacy conference on top of the hundreds that have already been supported by the federal government is, at best, a meek response to the challenge at hand. Nor is it news that any administration must work with Congress and the states to enact legislation that requires state funds. Yet, it is good to know the federal government proposes to act as model employer.

It is also curious that an almost "throw away" announcement appears in the Nation of Students section of the agenda. It promotes one-stop assessment and referral Skill Clinics in only large communities and work-sites. But establishing such clinics would only contribute to the already fractured non-system that tangles our landscape—and creates a Gordian Knot around the local labor market.

Currently the Department of Labor (DOL) is facing a set of tough choices about whether the severely weakened network of local employment service offices will be able to continue administering the General Aptitude Battery Tests (GABT). States, too, are struggling with how to keep all of its employment offices open in order to serve unemployed workers and community employers.

An alternative to this "program idea" would be to encourage the states to experiment with the creation of an Information Exchange Service. This service would develop usable information for students on occupational requirements and earning potential, and information about the cost and quality of education and/or training services provided thorough various institutions. For individuals seeking job placement, help would be offered in job search skills. Solid information about career growth opportunities in various occupations, hiring practices and entry requirements within industry groupings would be provided, and student skill levels and aptitudes for different types of occupations—the Skill Clinic idea—would be assessed.

We need to recognize that employers seeking workers are not provided with satisfactory support from government. The Information Exchange Service could experiment with the creation of portfolios that document student and worker skills—including but not limited to the information from the "voluntary high school tests." Such a service could work with education and training institutions to develop easily accessible information about potential pools of applicants from the various institutions. It could also provide information and support to employers about how to establish skill requirements for individual jobs and assist in the development of job classification systems.

Funds currently allocated for the employment service could be used to support this experiment. This would change a direct service agency to one that would provide the foundation of a much-needed, coherent service system for everyone. Such an experiment would support the idea of creating a Nation of Productive Workers/Students.

The Bush Administration's plan is on target in its recognition of the importance of the nascent efforts of the Commission on Work-Based Learning and the SCANS efforts. These are essential building blocks for a new foundation, but much more must be done. The classification of jobs is woefully out of date, the resources committed to career information systems are shamefully scarce, the outworn and outdated support for education and training at the job site itself demands major new thinking—and is essential to the success of the Nation of Productive Workers/Students agenda. Only the federal government can pull the pieces together. For adults, job-relevant learning matters most—but the strategic plan does not build upon this essential reality. We need to act on what we know.

TAKING AIM: MAKING THE NATION SMARTER

Thomas G. Sticht

"Since the initiation of the major education reforms of the mid-Sixties, a large body of research suggests that the best education reform program for children is a well-educated family. The bulls-eye is the general improvement of the entire nation."

America 2000 appears to me as the first expression of an evolving set of actions aimed, with some uncertainty, at a yet-to-be well-defined goal. For lack of a better way of saying it, I will call the goal, "making the nation smarter." While *America 2000* does not state this goal directly, it is implied in the many activities across the nation to improve learning from "the womb to the tomb" and from one generation to the next.

I call this an "emergent" national strategy because we are not fully aware of the many forces driving this new focus on human cognitive ability. The globalization of world economies, instantaneous international telecommunications, the achievements of education in developing and industrialized nations that compete with the United States, the forces of international societies for science, education, culture, peace and environmental salvation, international crime syndicates that pose common threats to and mobilize the community of world nations, and the victory of democracy and capitalism over totalitarianism and communism are only a few of the factors shaping this evolving strategy to make the nation smarter.

Education Reform: The Shift from Internal to International Frames of Reference

What is causing the movement toward this new goal? Perhaps it is the overall recognition that the United States, is both interdependent and in competition with the world community of nations. In the past, as exemplified by the War on Poverty, our focus on educational reform was based on internal inequalities; on those segments of our population whose skills deviated from some overall national norm. The poor lacked skills to get and hold a well-paying job. Their children entered school unprepared for learning. They left school without achieving adequate skills for finding and holding a good job, and the cycles of poverty repeated themselves.

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* fundamentally redirected the goals of educational reform. It was not about the needs of the poor. Instead, the imminent danger it described was a "rising tide of mediocrity" that threatened the entire nation's economic status.

With U.S. businesses and industries losing out to other nations in areas of manufacturing and electronics consumer goods, new approaches to education reform were needed. Donald E. Peterson, former Chief Executive Officer of the Ford Motor Company, expressed the new need for educational reform by stating that "Even the best among us will have to become smarter" (*Education Week*, October 12, 1988).

In such reports and statements, the overall goals of education reform were directed away from helping the poor or underclass achieve parity with the middle class. Though these goals were expressed, the rhetoric clearly placed them on the fringes of the new "target" for educational reform. The "bulls-eye" is the general improvement of the entire nation.

A Nation of Students

Part III of *America 2000* captures the spirit of this new goal—making the nation smarter—by abandoning the old idea of "going back to school to get a high school diploma so I can finish my education."

The inclusion of adult literacy education and lifelong learning for all as goal number five of the National Education Goals, and the expression of this idea in Part III of *America 2000* constitute a significant shift from earlier education reform movements. With lifelong learning, education is never finished.

This new goal suggests that cognitive skills can be learned throughout one's lifetime—in marked contrast to the assumption of the last major education reform era, the War on Poverty. In that movement, the emphasis was on preschool and early grades compensatory education to help children overcome the lack of educational stimulation thought typical of impoverished homes.

Programs such as Head Start were premised on beliefs, buttressed by psychological research, that a child's "intelligence" was about 80–90 percent formed by age 5 or 6. Therefore, in order to break the cycle of poverty, efforts to overcome the educational deficiencies of the poor needed to be made in the early years of life.

It was not thought that much could be done educationally for the adult parents of poor children. The best thing for them would be jobs—with or without training. So, while billions of dollars were put into early childhood education to make the next generation of children from poor families smarter, only a very little money was put into the adult education act. Even today, there is over six billion dollars in Chapter One for elementary school education and only some 250 million dollars for the adult education program.

In the War on Poverty it was assumed that, while children should be students, their parents should finish school and then get a job to pay taxes to reimburse the state for the services provided, including education.

The first shift that the focus on adults—all adults—as lifelong learners makes is to relinquish the ideas that cognitive skills are mostly developed during early childhood and that individuals cannot be expected to develop their skills much in their adult years. The new emphasis on adult literacy and lifelong learning as a major part of the education strategy of *America 2000* is a significant departure from the past.

The second major shift of a focus on adults as learners reflects a new, and still growing, awareness of the role of parents in the education of their children: "For our children to understand the importance of their own education, we must demonstrate that learning is important to grown-ups, too." (*America 2000*, p. 19).

Since the initiation of the major education reforms of the mid-Sixties, a large body of research suggests that the best education "reform" program for children is a well-educated family. And, a special appreciation of the role of the mother's education has developed. Across a developmental sequence that starts within the womb, when the mother's bloodstream is in communication with

that of the baby's, and continues through the school years, the mother's education level is one of the most significant factors influencing the educational achievement of her children.

The new belief that youth and adults can learn, and learn significantly complex and extensive knowledge and skills, has brought a new dimension to the emerging strategy for making the nation smarter. New programs in family literacy, new commitments to education in job training programs, workplace literacy, and lifelong education programs may turn out to be more cost-beneficial than early childhood programs for improving the nation's intellectual prowess.

Evidence is growing to suggest that the dollars spent in educating adults return extra dividends by improving the educational achievement of their children. Thus, by investing in the education of adults, business and industry may get double duty dollars. They may improve the education of their workforce and, through the intergenerational transfer of the parent's education to their children, the same dollars may improve the educability of the parent's children. Thus, by investing in adult education, businesses and industries may improve both the productivity of the workplace and the productivity of schools.

With this focus on adult education, and the additional emphasis of *America 2000* on improving *community commitment to education*, the President's education strategy has emphasized the importance of all the nation's institutions, not just the schools, in achieving new standards of educational excellence. Educational achievement is not simply the personal achievement of an individual operating within an efficiently run "schoolplace," but is, rather, a cultural achievement of the total society. Thus, the President's strategy moves well beyond past attempts to improve education solely within the schools.

THE AUTHORS
(listed alphabetically)

GORDON M. AMBACH is Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers following ten years as the New York State Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York. In addition to 20 years of leadership in the NY State Education Department, he has served on the National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences and the Advisory Committee of the UCLA Center for Research on Evaluation Standards and Student Testing.

JOSE A. CARDENAS, a leading advocate of school finance reform, has led the Intercultural Development Research Association since 1973. Previously he served as teacher, principal, supervisor and superintendent of the Edgewood (San Antonio) Independent School District and as a professor at several universities. He serves on the boards of the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, Minority Action Council—Quality Education for Minorities, National Institute for Development of Hispanic Leadership, and many others.

FORREST P. CHISMAN, President of the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis, is author of *Jump Start: The Federal Role in Adult Literacy; Leadership for Literacy: The Agenda for the 1990s* and *Government for the People: The Federal Social Role* (with Alan Pifer). From 1983-88, he directed the Project on the Federal Social Role. He also served in the U.S. Commerce Department and at the John and Mary Markle Foundation.

JOHN E. CHUBB, Senior Fellow in the Governmental Studies Program at The Brookings Institution, is the author of numerous books and articles on national politics and policy. His most recent work, co-authored with Terry M. Moe, is *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*. Formerly on the faculty at Stanford University, he has also been a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University and Princeton University.

DENIS P. DOYLE, a Senior Research Fellow at the Hudson Institute, has been Director of Education Policy and Human Capital Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, a Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Assistant Director of the National Institute of Education, Assistant Director of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity and also worked for the U.S. Congress and the California Legislature. He is co-author of five recent books, including *Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive*, with David T. Kearns, formerly Chairman and CEO of Xerox, now Deputy Secretary of Education. His most recent work (co-authored with Bruce S. Cooper and Roberta Trachtman) is *Taking Charge: State Action on School Reform in the 1980s*.

RICHARD F. ELMORE, Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is also Senior Research Fellow at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education. In addition to faculty appointments at the University of Washington and Michigan State, he has held senior positions at the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the U.S. Office of Education. His research focuses on state-local relations in education policy, school organization and educational choice.

SUSAN H. FUHRMAN, Professor of Education Policy at Rutgers University, is Director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, a joint venture of Rutgers, the University of Southern California, Harvard University, Michigan State University, Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has been a member of the Westfield, New Jersey Board of Education since 1986 and currently serves as its Vice President.

SID GARDNER is at the University of Southern California's School of Social Work and California State University, Fullerton and is Director of the Youth at Risk Project of California Tomorrow, which provides technical assistance to communities and school districts integrating services to children and youth. He served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of HEW under Elliot Richardson and was involved in early services integration projects. A former City Council Member in Hartford, Connecticut, he now chairs the California Children's Policy Council, a coalition of twenty groups working on policy research in issues affecting children's programs in California.

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND is Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and Co-Director of the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching. She has published studies of teacher evaluation and selection practices, teacher supply and demand, teacher education and certification, inequalities in student's educational opportunities, the development of educational indicators, accountability and assessment, and school restructuring, and co-edited *The New Handbook of Teacher Evaluation*. A former Senior Social Scientist and Director of the Education and Human Resources Program at the Rand Corporation, she also directed the National Urban Coalition's Excellence in Education Program where she conducted research on exemplary city school programs and urban school finance.

HAROLD HOWE II, a former classroom teacher, high school principal and school superintendent, served as education advisor to Governor Terry Sanford of North Carolina, as U.S. Commissioner of Education and as Vice President for Education and Public Policy at the Ford Foundation. Presently Senior Lecturer Emeritus at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, he serves on the boards of the Educational Testing Service and Public/Private Ventures. He chaired the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, which published *The Forgotten Half* reports in 1988.

GEORGE KAPLAN, a former diplomat and coordinator of the Institute for Educational Leadership's Washington Policy Seminar, writes regularly in *Phi Delta Kappan* and elsewhere on issues of educational and social policy. He is author of *Who Runs Our Schools? The Changing Face of Educational Leadership* and the forthcoming *Images of Education: The Mass Media's Version of America's Schools*.

MICHAEL W. KIRST is Professor of Education and Business Administration at Stanford University. He has served as Staff Director of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Manpower, Employment and Poverty and Director of Program Planning and Evaluation for the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S. Office of Education. Author of ten books, he is a member of the National Academy of Education, Vice-President of the American Educational Research Association, a commissioner of the Education Commission of the States, Associate Editor of the *Journal of Educational Evaluation and Policy*, and Co-Director of PACE, Policy Analysis for California Education.

ANNE C. LEWIS, a national education policy writer, has written monthly for the past ten years for *Phi Delta Kappan* and her bylined articles about adult literacy, youth policy, and education have appeared recently in the *New York Times, Baltimore Sun, Human Capital* and *Agenda*. Lewis is editor of *High Strides*, a bi-monthly publication on urban middle grades published by the Education Writers Association, and author of *Restructuring America's Schools* and *Making It in the Middle: The How and Why of Excellent Schools for Young Urban Adolescents*.

JOAN LIPSITZ is Program Director, Education of the Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis. Formerly, she established and directed the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, taught in the University's Bush Institute for Child and Family Policy and in the School of Public Health, and consulted with numerous foundations, schools and government agencies.

MILBREY W. MC LAUGHLIN is Professor in the Stanford University School of Education and Director of the federally-funded Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching. As a policy analyst at the Rand Corporation, she worked on implementation studies of federal education programs, particularly the Rand Change Agent Study.

EDWARD J. MEADE, JR. has worked 36 years on the improvement of public schools, including 30 as a senior program officer at the Ford Foundation. He is an independent consultant to other foundations on school reform and advised the federal government —Departments of Education, Defense, and HEW—and several state governments. A board member of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, Reading-Is-Fundamental and the College of the Atlantic, he chaired the Board of Trustees of Jersey City State College and founded and chaired the NJ Public Broadcasting Authority.

SIOBHAN O. NICOLAU is President of the Hispanic Policy Development Project, which designs and administers national projects related to Hispanic American employment, training, and education. As a program officer at the Ford Foundation from 1968 to 1981, she developed and implemented large private-sector Hispanic American and Native American grant programs. She now advises various foundations and corporations on Hispanic issues and the Hispanic market.

JEANNIE OAKES is Professor of Education Policy and Administration at the University of California—Los Angeles and a former Senior Social Scientist at the Rand Corporation. Her research focuses on the impact of education policy and school organization on the opportunities of low-income and minority students. She is author of *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* and co-author (with Martin Lipton) of *Making the Best of Schools: A Handbook for Parents, Teachers and Policymakers.*

GARY ORFIELD is Professor of Political Science and Education at the University of Chicago. Among his books are *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy: The Closing Door: Conservative Policy and Black Opportunity*. He directs the Metropolitan Opportunity Project, a study of changing patterns of opportunity in five large metropolitan areas over the past generation. He will join the faculty at Harvard University this Fall.

JAMES E. ROSENBAUM is Professor of Sociology, Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University. Formerly on the faculty at Yale, he has published two books and many articles on employment, education and housing issues. In addition to current research on low-income black children in white suburbs, he is studying the school-to-employment transition in the U.S. and abroad.

MARSHALL S. SMITH, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, has extensive experience with local, state and federal education policy making and implementation. He directed the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, was Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and served as Executive Assistant and Chief of Staff to the U.S. Secretary of Education, Assistant Commissioner of Education for Policy Studies, and Associate Director of the National Institute for Education. He writes extensively on effective schools, the use of statistical indicators in policy making, systematic school reform, and the movement toward a national curriculum. He is on advisory committees for the General Accounting Office, National Science Foundation and the Department of Education.

THOMAS G. STICHT is President, Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, El Cajon, California. A former Associate Director of the National Institute for Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, he currently serves on the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the National Governors' Association's Resource Group for Goal 5 of the National Education Goals.

MICHAEL TIMPANE is President of Teachers College, Columbia University. He has served in senior positions at the Rand Corporation, Brookings Institution, and U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. A founding member of the Holmes Group, he is co-chair of the New Jersey State Commission on Quality Education, the Aspen Institute's Program for Education in a Changing Society, and is the author of numerous books and articles.

GERALD N. TIROZZI, Connecticut Commissioner of Education since 1983, is a leader in the reform of the teaching profession and an innovator in the area of student testing. He serves on national boards including the Educational Testing Service, the Task Force on Teacher and Student Assessment, Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

THOMAS TOCH is the education correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report* and author of *In the Name of Excellence*, an examination of the reform movement in public education (1991).

MICHAEL D. USDAN, President of the Institute for Educational Leadership since 1981, was formerly Connecticut Commissioner of Higher Education and President of the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit. A former teacher and school board president, he served on the staff of Dr. James B. Conant, taught at several universities, and contributed many articles on government and the politics of education.

BERNARD C. WATSON has been President and Chief Executive Officer of the William Penn Foundation in Philadelphia since 1981. His previous positions include public school teacher and principal in Gary, Indiana; Deputy School Superintendent in Philadelphia; professor and Academic Vice President at Temple University. He has also served on the National Advisory Council on Education Professions Development and the National Council on Educational Research.

WILLIAM W. WAYSON, Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership at Ohio State University, has also been a teacher and principal. His workshops on "Creating Schools that Teach Self-Discipline" have been conducted throughout the U.S. and abroad. The author of many articles and books, he also consults extensively on issues related to at-risk students and school climate.

JOAN L. WILLS is Director, Center for Workforce Development, Institute for Educational Leadership. She has served as director of the Illinois agency responsible for education and training programs, as a liaison between the states and the federal government on employment and training issues for the National Governors' Association and head of the Association's Center for Policy Research. For the National Center on Education and the Economy she served as Vice President and project manager for the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce and *America's Choice: High Skills Or Low Wages!*

ARTHUR E. WISE, President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, was Director of the Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession at the Rand Corporation, an Associate Director of the National Institute of Education, Visiting Scholar at the Educational Testing Service, and Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Education at the University of Chicago. Author of *Rich Schools, Poor Schools* (1969) and *Legislated Learning (1979)*, Wise was also consultant to President Carter's reorganization project leading to the creation of the U.S. Department of Education.

William T. Grant Foundation
Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 301
Washington, D.C. 20036-5541